

**Issues Facing Japanese Postgraduate Students  
Studying at the University of London  
with Special Reference to Gender**

by

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## Abstract

This study is based on interviews and questionnaires with 52 Japanese postgraduate students (25 women and 27 men) at the University of London and the author's participant observation. It examines (1) the issues Japanese postgraduate students face while studying abroad, (2) what made them decide to study abroad, and (3) their thoughts on the period following their course, all with special reference to gender.

Previous studies on international students have tended to focus on academic life, overlooking how personal life affects academic performance. They have also tended to treat international students as a homogeneous group, missing the differences, for example, in nationality, gender and level of study. As a fellow student, I felt from daily observation, that women faced more issues, particularly personal issues, than men.

The principal findings are that women, single women with financial support from their parents in particular, tended to suffer from more issues and in more complicated ways than men. The only issue clearly common to both women and men is language proficiency. Issues particularly serious in their intensity among women were often in relation to marriage and parents. In contrast, issues among men centred on their careers. These gender differences are a reflection of gender expectations in the wider Japanese society. Issues specific to women and men were also closely linked to each individual's decision to study abroad, and to their future plans.

The findings highlight the need for further research on the condition of international students which (1) uses qualitative international students, (2) divides students into special groups, (3) pays greater attention to both educational *and* personal aspects of their lives, and (4) examining the links among international students' reasons for deciding to study abroad, the issues which they may encounter while studying abroad, and their aspirations for the post-course period. Such research would help to promote new policies and practices to improve the welfare of international students in the UK, and hence this country's capacity to attract more students.

## **Acknowledgement**

During the writing of this thesis there have been many happy times but indeed many sad times. I was an international student and, as I argue in the thesis, the personal and the educational lives of international students constitute the student experience. This was certainly true for me.

When I was particularly depressed, lonely and sad, I would find myself wanting to return to my country. At those times I would say to myself, 'I am in London because Diana is here'. I am not sure whether I would have remained in London without such a sharp, stimulating, exciting and warm-hearted supervisor as Professor Leonard. I thank Professor Diana Leonard, my wonderful supervisor, from my heart.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The internationalisation of education has been the subject of active discussion in countries and organizations, e.g. the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU). From these discussions, have stemmed many programmes and schemes promoting international mobility among academic staff and students developed since the late 1980s: the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) among EU countries,<sup>1</sup> the *NORDPLUS Programme* among north European countries, University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) among countries in Asian and the Pacific regions. Also some individual countries, for example the UK and Australia, have been notably eager to recruit international students. One reason for this development is that international students play a role for these countries 'as an antidote to insularity on the part of both staff and students; providing a broader outlook in higher education; as a check on standards and in ways of approach and thinking' (Jiang, 1994: 165). Another is, however, the economic benefit that international students bring when they pay 'full-cost' overseas fees - which may be nearly three times as much as that paid by home (Niven, 1987a: 146; Williams, 1987: 3). Many higher educational institutions in various countries now depend heavily on the tuition fees of international students, and their drives to recruit international students have been accelerated. There is even a word, 'uni-business', to describe this (Langmead, 1998: 5).

The increase in interest in studying abroad among Japanese people was triggered by the transition from a fixed exchange system to a floating exchange rate system in 1973. It had thus begun before international mobility was encouraged in the ways stated by the 'receiving' countries. However, the trend towards the internationalisation of education and the increased availability of information on studying abroad, contributed by foreign higher educational institutions' energetic recruitment drives,

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<sup>1</sup> ERASMUS was integrated within the more broadly based SOCRATES programme in 1995 (Teichler and Maiworm, 1997: III).



have certainly encouraged Japanese people to take opportunities to study abroad.

Riding the crest of the popularisation of studying abroad, many Japanese students now choose to study in the UK. The 2,079 students in 1973 were increased nearly twenty-fold to 38,900 in 1996 (HMSO, 1973-1996 cited in Habu, 2000: 50), including 2,195 postgraduate (HESA, 1998) - 5.6% of the total number of Japanese students studying in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis will explore the issues facing such Japanese postgraduate students, and specifically those at the University of London in the late 1990s, with special reference to gender. There are two reasons why I became interested in working on this topic. The first is very much related to my own experience as a postgraduate student in London. When I started my doctorate, I had already spent several years, including a year working for an MA degree, in the UK. The more time I spent as a student in the UK, the more I came to know that many Japanese women postgraduate students, my colleagues, encounter many issues not only with studying and but also in their personal lives. They often appear to be trapped by 'an ideal image of a woman': one who marries and lives happily with her family, making it her priority. I simultaneously gained the impression that relatively few Japanese women had any clear purpose behind their studying abroad and were not really interested in making use of this experience in any future career. These tendencies seemed, surprisingly, to be shared by most such women, regardless of their length of stay or level of study.

Considering that the number of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK is relatively small, which indicates that studying at postgraduate levels is still unusual, it might be expected that Japanese women postgraduate students would be more 'modern' and vocationally minded than seems to be the case. Moreover, although on the one hand I was shocked and disappointed to find that many Japanese postgraduate women students I met were much more traditional and aimless in their studies than I had expected; I was also relieved. It was as if I had permission to spend some time thinking about a dilemma within myself: between my desire not to lose the virtues of being a Japanese woman (i.e. being modest and treating men with due respect) and my desire to free myself from this traditional mode of femininity. I realised when working for my MA in women's studies that seeing traditional feminine values including modesty as a

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<sup>2</sup> 1,166 women and 1,029 men (HESA, 1998)

virtue was the product of gendered society. However, the influence of the society where I had been brought up, and especially the influence of my family were so strong that I was still confused when I thought about the kind of attitude I wanted to take in relation to men. So I started looking for literature that explored the issues which other international students, and particularly women students, faced while studying abroad.

This process of looking for past research-based information led on to the second reason why I became interested in doing this study. As I searched for work on international students, I found little shortage of 'advice' literature for such students and the staff who work with them and plentiful discussion of policies and programmes for hosting international students. However, there was extremely little research that explored the lives of international students. The statistical data were also poor. This threw doubt on the British attitudes towards those students. I wondered, 'Are the British really interested in knowing about international students?' and 'How can they "advise" international students without knowing much about the actual situation they are in?' At the same time, I also came to realise that such research as did exist had empirical and methodological problems. In short:

1. The quantity of research-based studies of international students in the UK is limited.
2. Although 'advice' literature and literature on policies and programmes are much more available, they rarely attend to international students' voices as reflected in fieldwork.
3. Statistical data on international students is limited.
4. Much attention is paid to students' study life, but little is paid to their personal life, although the latter can influence the former to a great extent.
5. Most of the literature on international students regards them as a 'homogenous group' and pays little attention to the differences among them, for example, by gender, ethnicity, or level of study, and differences within those categories.
6. Most of the research-based literature is exclusively based on quantitative rather than qualitative research.

The lack of research-based studies on international students is surprising when it is considered that the UK is second only to the US in the number of international students

which it receives - and in the US a lot of work in this field has been carried out. According to *The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1999*, there were 453,785 international students in tertiary education in the US, 198,839 in the UK, 165,977 in Germany, 138,191 in France, and 102,284 in Australia (UNESCO, 1999: II-486-II-489).<sup>3</sup> Considering the reliance of many higher educational institutions in the UK on international student tuition fees, together with an increasingly fierce international competition for such students, it must be concluded that the UK, as evidenced by key reports such as the Dearing Committee (1997), has been taking the situation too lightly (see Scott, 1997: 4).

The UK is aware that it needs to develop practices that appeal to international students and their sponsors (governments, employers and parents), and for that purpose needs to provide them with information and advice that is both interesting and useful. However, what UK policy makers seem unaware of is that it is essential that the UK should first listen to the diversity of international students and thoroughly understand their varied situations. Otherwise, the UK will fail to deliver the improvement for which international students hope, and will eventually lose many international students and perhaps the overall battle for students in the international market.

As a Japanese feminist, I was also disappointed to find not only few studies of international students, but also especially few of women, and almost none which reflected the voice of international women students and examined what women find difficult and how they negotiate with foreign cultures while studying abroad.

To know more about my colleagues and myself, and to explore this field, I therefore decided to use my doctoral research to embark on studying (1) the issues which Japanese postgraduate students face while studying abroad, (2) the motives behind Japanese postgraduate students' decisions to study abroad and (3) their thoughts on the post-course period - all of these with a particular reference to gender. In this thesis I shall focus particularly on (1), the period of study abroad, because my original interest in Japanese postgraduate students stemmed from my daily observation of them. However, I shall also examine aspects of (2) and (3), the periods before and after the period of study abroad, in order to deepen the analysis of (1).

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<sup>3</sup> The years on which the data was based were slightly different among those countries: the US data was for 1995/96, for the UK 1996/97, Germany 1996/97, France 1995/96, and Australia 1997. Also, who counts as an 'international' student varies from country to country.

I have used a qualitative approach in this research and obtained information by conducting semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions as well as questionnaires with 52 Japanese postgraduate students (27 men and 25 women) studying at the University of London, as well as drawing on my own participant-observer experience. The University of London is a federation of 43 Colleges and Institutes (University of London External Relations Unit, 1999: 2-3), and has the largest number of Japanese students of all UK universities. In locating the participants, my aim was to obtain as rich a source of information as possible by minimising the distortion of information caused by the power-relationship of the researcher and researched.<sup>4</sup>

Looking back on the past four years of study, I can see how I have changed a lot through devoting myself to women's studies and living in the UK, where women seem to have more freedom to express their opinions in front of men than in Japan. Modesty, one of the virtues about which I was particularly concerned, is still alive as a part of my identity; however, it is important for me not only as a woman but also as a person. My belief in treating men with due respect, the other virtue to which I used to adhere, has however changed dramatically. I remember that I would sometimes say to a person I was talking with, especially to a man, 'Yes, I think so', in order to show my agreement with the person. I would do this even when I could not really agree with him/her, in order to behave 'properly' as a young woman. My priority was to behave correctly, over and above showing a genuine or heartfelt respect towards that person. I now wonder if in doing so I was actually holding back from really communicating with the person.

This thesis has eight other chapters:

Chapter 2 first discusses world trends in studying abroad today, with special reference to the Japanese as international students. It also gives some brief background information on aspects of Japanese society: the labour market, marriage, relationships between children and parents, higher education, and the attitude of Japanese government to studying abroad. Its purpose is to link the Japanese context with issues its students face while studying abroad, the reasons why they study abroad, and their thoughts on the period following their course. It concludes with a statistical analysis of

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 4.5 for the further discussion on the power-relationship between researcher and researched.

Japanese postgraduate students in the UK compared to international students in general, to clarify trends among Japanese postgraduates and their relationship to Japanese society.

Chapter 3 reviews the existing literature on international students in the UK, with some reference to other major 'host' countries, notably the US and Australia. It presents various problems which emerge from this review.

Chapter 4 explains the design and execution of the research and considers its delimitations and limitations.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the issues mentioned by the 52 participants in this study - issues of 'educational' and 'personal' life - and then concentrates on the analysis of issues in educational life, with particular reference to gender.

Chapter 6 examines issues in students' personal lives, again with particular reference to gender.

Chapter 7 examines the participants' reasons for undertaking postgraduate studies in the UK. It aims to improve the understanding of the gender differences in the issues they face while studying abroad, by examining these in relation to the students' antecedent motivations.

Chapter 8 analyses the occupational categories which the participants hope to occupy on their return to Japan, as a yardstick of how serious they are about utilising their experience of studying abroad and to investigate their thoughts on the post-course period. It also aims at better comprehending gender differences while abroad by looking at them in relation to the kind of careers the participants want and their thoughts on the future.

These four chapters of findings all focus particularly on gender differences, but also refer to other kinds of difference, for example, by level and field of study, age and marital status.

The concluding chapter briefly discusses the meaning and role of study abroad for Japanese postgraduate students. It goes on to discuss the links between issues while studying abroad, reasons for students' decisions to study abroad, and thoughts on the future. It analyses the relationships between Japanese studying abroad and Japanese society, evaluates the contribution of this study to research on international students generally, and makes suggestions for future studies.

Throughout the thesis, the terms 'women' and 'men' students are used, rather than

'female' or 'male students', since female (and male) are terms 'reserved in feminist theory for the purely biological aspect of sexual differences, with "feminine" as the term for the social construction of women' (Humm, 1995: 91).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Adkins (1995), introductory chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Trends in Japanese Studying Abroad**

If we ask international students why they are studying abroad, the answers we receive will be much more complicated than we might expect. Some may talk about their purposes for their studies, for example, to advance their careers and to pursue their interests, while others may describe the reasons why they initially came to a particular country or city, for example, to go to a language school or to accompany their spouses who came on business. Yet others may also explain reasons which led them to move, for example, relationship problems or exhaustion from work.

In this chapter, I shall first concentrate on discussing the general view of the needs of international students 'at the national level'. This will provide a comparison between the characteristics of Japanese students who study abroad and international students from other countries. I shall then go on to a general discussion of trends in Japanese studying abroad, and finally to an analysis of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK to establish the particular circumstances of the participants.

#### **2.1 The need to study abroad from the point of view of national conditions**

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(Cummings, 1987: 22)

The tendencies summarised in the following Table 2-1, produced by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the US, gives some important indications and ideas for understanding the trends in international students world-wide, although no individual or country necessarily fits this classification. However, the content and extent of the needs

**Table 2-1 National characteristics by international students' fields of study in the US**

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Source: Davis (1997:66)

while studying abroad certainly do differ among international students, depending on who is paying their costs: tuition fees, living expenses, and other. Those who are 'officially' sponsored by a government or a company are expected to acquire a foreign language and knowledge, and skills in a special field which he or she will be expected to contribute to these institutions on their return.<sup>6</sup> In such cases, study abroad is often based on the 'need' to supplement what is lacking in the country with foreign education. I therefore deliberately use the word, 'need', to refer to the situation where there is a requirement at the national level to make up for what is lacking in the student's own country with foreign education, and to differentiate this need from the explanation of reasons at the individual level. By contrast, self-funding students can prioritise their own interests. Some may nonetheless study abroad for the same reasons as sponsored

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<sup>6</sup> However, this is not always the case in reality. See Sections 7.8 and 8.9 for further discussion.



students: the need to supplement what is lacking in his/her country. In which case, they share a common aim with the first group and both are likely to have a close link with a labour market which demands language proficiency and specialist knowledge or skills or international competence which can only be acquired abroad. The proportion of international students who study abroad because of this kind of need is the highest in nations (1) and least in nations (3); and is also closely related to the proportion of sponsored students to self-funded students. The higher the proportion of sponsored students, the higher the proportion of students who study abroad because of the need to supplement what is lacking in their home country.

But there are also international students who study abroad for other reasons. They may study abroad from pure interest in their subject and a desire to share the higher education experience typical of their destinations (Ball, 1987: 55). Others may study abroad from an interest in personal development (Leonard, 1998b: 28; Habu, 2000: 52), or as an excuse to escape from the constraints or difficulties they have experienced in their home countries (Schwantes, 1955: 196; Habu, 2000: 52). These students obviously tend to be seen more among self-funded students and in Table 2-1 are most concentrated in nations (3). For those who decide to study abroad based on their interests, foreign education as a supplement may be an important element, but not as important as fulfilling their own interests.

In relation to interest in the subject and personal growth, it is often said that women students are less vocationally-oriented than men students (Moses, 1990: 20; Islam, 1997; Leonard, 1998b: 28). More women than men tend to study the humanities and the arts, which are less related to career prospects than are economics, science or engineering (see Section 2.5.4 for more discussion). Considering the relationship between needs at national level and those two special features of women, it is possible to hypothesis that international students studying abroad who base their interests on the subject itself and/or personal growth are most likely to be self-funding women students in the arts and humanities.

## **2.2 Japanese studying abroad today**

According to the *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1998*, 62,284 Japanese students were studying abroad at higher educational levels in the mid 1990s - twice as many as five years previously: 73% of them in the US, 14% in China, and 7% in the UK.<sup>7</sup> Small numbers of Japanese students were also in Germany, France, Canada and Australia. The US thus enjoys a preponderance, which has not changed since 1868 when the first records of Japanese international students became available (Ishizuki, 1985: 168). The other countries mentioned above have also always been popular among Japanese students, but well behind the US. China became the second highest destination in 1993 and its position has been consistent since due to students' expectations of China's political and economic expansion (UNESCO, 1993).<sup>8</sup> Prior to 1993, either Germany or the UK had held the second place for long periods of time.

### **2.2.1 Why the Japanese study abroad**

There are several possible reasons why studying abroad has been increasingly popular among Japanese people. Ishizuki (1990: 2-3), for example, notes the appreciation in value of the yen (since the transition from a fixed exchange system to a floating exchange rate system in 1973). Equally important is the increase in available information on studying abroad, official recognition of its value through the establishment of exchange programmes (Ishizuki, 1990: 2-3). Other reasons include the desire for mobility and challenge, greater intellectual appetite and the limitation of courses offered by Japanese universities and those universities open to adults or working members of society (Ishizuki, 1990:2-3). To these reasons, may be added the reduction in the costs of flight (Habu, 2000: 50) and the emphasis on educational background as the basis for success in the society (Umakoshi, 1985: 158); especially young people, who look to make themselves appear more valuable through obtaining degrees from foreign academic institutions.

But are these the really only reasons for the increase in Japanese studying abroad? I believe that other equally important but rather indirect factors to be considered.

Firstly, there is the individualisation of budgets within the family, accompanied by

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<sup>7</sup> The numbers for the US and the UK are for 1995/96, and for China 1993/94.

<sup>8</sup> See also Appendix I-1 for the number of international students enrolled in higher education by country.

the increase of employment outside. The high growth period of the 1960s brought many job opportunities, which made it easier for parents and children to be financially independent of each other, compared to the time pre-1960 when children were a financial resource for their families.<sup>9</sup> Many young adults<sup>10</sup> can therefore make their own decisions about how they want to use their money, regardless of whether or not they live with their parents. As a result, study abroad has become more accessible for ordinary young adults.

Secondly, there is an increase of so-called 'handy jobs' - i.e. part-time and temporary jobs - particularly for women. This has encouraged mobility between work and what individuals want or need to do (for example, hobbies, travelling, or childrearing).

Thirdly (see also Section 2.3.3), parents are prepared to self-sacrifice for their children's happiness. Many do not mind offering financial support for what their children want to do, even when the 'children' are old enough to be making their own living. Underlying this is a strong belief in Japan that good parents willingly sacrifice themselves for their children's happiness, especially in terms of education. This makes it easy for young adults to get financial support for their study abroad.

All these factors together mean that study abroad has become more accessible than ever before for Japanese people.

### **2.2.2 The cold-shouldering of those who do study abroad**

The increase in the numbers of Japanese students studying abroad does not necessarily mean that Japanese society is tolerant of those who return from such an experience. On the contrary, these 'returnees' may feel excluded by a continuing strong negative bias. This is similar to American people's negative attitudes towards American undergraduates studying abroad as discussed by Burn:

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<sup>9</sup> See Miyamoto (1992) for more detail about the individualisation of budgets within families.

<sup>10</sup> The term 'young adult' is used here as in Miyamoto et. al. (1997) to refer to people who have completed their school education and are still aged 35 or under.

lacks in seriousness of purpose. (Burn, 1985: 52)

There is no problem here with changing not only 'American' to 'Japanese' but also 'undergraduate' to 'postgraduate' students.

That those who return to Japan after studying abroad are not well received by society was well described in one Japanese magazine article. Here a Japanese women, who had studied in the US, talked about looking for work in the US rather than Japan because of the strength of the bias and the disadvantage they felt in the latter (Nakamura, M., 2000: 32).<sup>11</sup> There has, however, been some exceptional good news recently, in that Nissan, the Japanese car manufacturer, has started employing graduates from foreign universities because they expect those who have studied abroad to have an international way of thinking which will be advantageous to the company's reconstruction (The Nikkei, 1 October 2000). In 1999, they reportedly hired four people who had studied in the US, the UK, and Canada. On the one hand, this is an indication that those who study abroad have started to be valued in Japan. On the other, the numbers are small and this is an indication of how the society has undervalued those who have studied abroad for a long time.

### **2.3 A brief overview of Japanese society**

It is important to consider the social environment that surrounds women and men in Japan so as to deepen understanding of the research findings discussed in later chapters. I shall therefore provide here a necessarily schematic general view of key elements in the Japanese labour market, marriage, relationships between children and parents, and higher education, with particular reference to gender.

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<sup>11</sup> White's (1988) study reports how much families who have lived abroad suffer from re-entry problems in Japanese society. See also The Nikkei (8 November 2000) for the cold-shouldering those who worked abroad.

### 2.3.1 The labour market

The seriousness of gender discrimination in Japan is widely recognised both outside and inside Japan (Namavar, 1984; Brinton 1993; Stockman et al., 1995; Ogasawara, 1998). It is said that women only earn 60% of that of men (Ida, 1995b: 64-65; Shinozuka, 1996: 129; Muraki, 2000: 47-50), mainly because many women work on a low pay part-time basis, having left full time work to get married or raise children, due to the difficulty in getting into full-time employment (Tanaka and Nishimura, 1986; Kimura and Baba, 1988: 178, Connell, 1994: 38). Simultaneously, one in three women have no wish to be promoted, because they do not want to accept more responsibility, or are worried about the compatibility of careers with their (future) family (Moses, 1990: 21; Stockman et al., 1995: 192; Islam, 1997; Hattori, 1999: 115). Moreover, there is a wage difference because of the gendered employment systems and occupational categories. Women are much more temporary and peripheral workers associated most commonly with clerical, routine selling, and other subordinate jobs (Tanaka and Nishimura, 1986: 215, Walby, 1986: 75; Ida, 1995b: 64-65; Stockman et al., 1995: 142; Islam, 1997; Arichi, 1999: 414; Yamada, 1999: 83).<sup>12</sup> Women are allocated to posts where they have less opportunity to be promoted than in the managerial jobs taken by many men (Allen et al., 1990: 28; Shinozuka, 1996: 129). These facts imply that employers' expectations of the level of women's work are much less than that of men. Clerical work is typical for highly educated women: half are engaged in this category of work (Inoue and Ehara, 1999: 43).

Women who do clerical jobs are known as *OL*, an abbreviation of 'office lady'. Although this is an English expression, it was coined in Japan. According to Ogasawara (1998: 9), who studied the resistance of OLs to their men colleagues in the male-dominated workplaces, these women can be called 'pink-collar' workers.<sup>13</sup> However, as Ogasawara (1998: 181-182) points out, it appears difficult to raise OLs' aspirations above devotion to such work. Many are reluctant to change, since the root is within the company employment system. Unless there are opportunities for promotion

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<sup>12</sup> See also Sharpe (1976: 54-55), Thomas (1993: 54), Witz (1997: 240), and Heath (1999: 259) for more discussion on gender discrimination in labour market.

<sup>13</sup> 'Pink' is used here, because this colour is often used to describe any association with the sex industry in which women 'entertain' men. Office ladies are traditionally required to 'take care of' men colleagues, for instance, by serving tea to them. The colour pink was used in this context to connect these two roles played by women.

based on their abilities, it is difficult for OLs to raise their aspirations. Many women are reluctant to accept to work with greater responsibility, and OLs are typical of this group. They prefer to enjoy their leisure time, leaving the office on time and making use of their paid holidays, to taking more responsibility - this contrasts with those in responsible posts who are too busy with their work to do either (Islam, 1997: 161). Securing leisure time is very important for OLs. They do not have to pledge as much loyalty to their employers as those men and women workers who chose to work on *sougoushoku* (the managerial track).

According to a report entitled 'OLs who are unaffected by recession and spend large amount of money', produced by Nikkei Sangyo Shouhi Kenkyusho in 1995, 50% of OLs have been abroad for holidays once and nearly 20% of them had been abroad twice in the previous year. Compared with a little over 10% of all Japanese who had been abroad, including business trips, this proportion is amazing (cited in Yamada, 1999: 41-42) and suggests how free OLs are both psychologically and financially. The reasons for this are, ironically, that their employers do not expect much from them, and that they dream of marrying financially stable men in order to entrust their rest of the lives to them: they therefore do not have to save much money. Few men can expect this of women. In comparison with OLs, many men work 'voluntarily' from early morning until late and sometimes even at weekends; and many 'cannot' go abroad until their honeymoon once they enter their workplace.

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to the super-exploitative demands of the company (Stockman et al., 1995: 193).

The reason many Japanese men pledge loyalty to their employers is because many employers apply a 'life-long employment' and seniority system. Only new graduates are recruited (White, 1988: 83; Amano, 1992; Thomas, 1993: 54), so there is not much opportunity to change their jobs. Men therefore rarely abandon their employers in Japan and tend to seek the opportunity to be promoted by committing themselves to one company (Stockman et al., 1995: 40).

### 2.3.2 Marriage

Japanese women are not treated in the same way as men in the labour market mainly because many employers believe and expect that women employees will leave employment after marriage and childbirth (Tanabe, 1989:23; Moses, 1990: 22; Ogasawara, 1998: 129). Some large companies have sections, which arranges for their women and men workers to meet each other. Such '[e]mployers of young single women often regard themselves as being in *loco parentis* and perceive the right and proper next stage for them to be marriage' (Stockman et al. 1995: 43); low wages also push women to marry (Adkins, 1995: 23). The popularity of being a housewife among highly educated Japanese women seems to be strongly related. Women know how hard it will be if they try to be financially independent, or to keep the same standard of living as they have through their own efforts in a sexually discriminating labour market. Moreover, many working women are ready to leave their workplaces when they have children. There is the strong belief held that mothers should stay at home and look after their small children even at the cost of losing the chance to return to work under the same conditions (Inoue, 1992: 88, 96; Ochiai, 1994: 173-174; Takahashi and Kashiwagi, 1995: 21-23; Sechiyama, 1996: 183; Ehara, 1999: 22; Yuzuki, 1999: 309). As a result, most women try to find financially secure men to whom they can 'sell' themselves and to whom they can entrust their lives.

The average (first) marriage age of women was 26.6 in Japan in 1997, while that of men was 28.5 (Inoue and Ehara, 1999: 11). Both women and men tend to marry later than ever before and one of the reasons is often considered to be the increase in women acquiring higher education and then entering the labour market. Others have suggested reason is the gap between what single women and men seek in a married life. Most men still look to their future wives to do most of the housework, as their mothers did, whereas women expect their husbands not only to work as the major income earner but also to share the housework (Ikei, 1991: 167; Ehara, 1999: 54; Mukuno, 2000: 184). As many Japanese academics point out, it is interesting to note that being a housewife is a goal among women, especially highly educated women in Japan (Ochiai, 1994; Sechiyama, 1996; Inoue and Ehara 1999:54; Yamada, 1999). For example, Yamada, who recently published a book on Japanese young people enjoying their 'luxurious' and carefree lifestyle, and describes them as being 'parasites' in their parents' homes, states:

(Yamada, 1999: 86)

Yamada also asserts that the reason why the sales of expensive goods (for example, designer clothes, bags, watches and high-quality cosmetics) have not dropped, despite the recent economic crisis, is that these 'parasitic' single women are 'devouring' these goods. They know that one day they will have to leave their parents' homes, and often their workplaces, too. If they stay, they will feel extremely uncomfortable because of the pressure to marry before it becomes 'too late' (Tanabe, 1989: 71; Ogura, 1994: 180).

As Ueno states, Japanese people love getting married (Ueno, 1990: 237). Although people marry later and the number of those who remain single all their lives is higher than ever, nearly 90% of single people still hope to marry in the future (Inoue and Ehara 1999: 15, Inubushi et al. 2000: 13). There are many reasons why marriage is viewed so favourably by single women and men. Both seek the emotional stability and social acknowledgement of marriage; and many salaried men tend to use their marriage as a means to climb the career ladder through being seen as capable men by their employers. If these men remained single at an 'advanced' age, they might be judged as men who could not even 'get' a woman and therefore, regarded as 'defective': not good for future career prospects. In contrast, women, especially OLs, regard marriage as a source of security and jump at the opportunity to 'tie the knot', preferring reliance on men to treading their own thorny path.



### **2.3.3 Relationships between children and parents**

There is a strong belief which goes back to the Meiji Era (1868-1912) that parents should put their children's happiness first (Koyama, 1991). Both fathers and mothers have devoted themselves to their children with the hope that their children will obtain what they themselves could not get when they were young, either because of the war, or for educational and financial reasons. The educational and career success of children has been a measure of parental affection towards their children (Miyamoto et al., 1997: 91).

As the demand for employees, with a strong academic background, rose to meet the development of Japanese firms (Amano, 1986b: 16; Shimbori and Kano, 1987: 112, Amano, 1992), the number of students who went on to higher education increased, and parents took it for granted that it was their responsibility to support their children financially while they were at universities. The following figure, which was reported by Sourifu (The Public Management Agency) in 1982, clearly shows that this tendency has been particularly strong among Japanese parents.

**Figure 2-1 Proportion of parents who pay their children's university tuition fees**

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Source: Miyamoto et al. (1997: 29)

The number of students who go on to postgraduate studies in Japan or abroad has also been increasing, for various reasons, including the emphasis on educational

qualifications and the difficulty of finding employment in Japan (The Asahi, 16 April 1999). It is thus likely that many parents will continue to support their children's education for many years to come as a demonstration of their love. Miyamoto et al. (1997: 5) state that parents think they will be happy if their children become independent around the age of 30, even though 20 is the official age of adulthood. It is also worth noting that many parents do *not* expect their children to take care of them financially and physically when they get old, though they expect some emotional attachment. Today's parents thus appear to be extremely self-sacrificing.

How, then, do young adults see and influence their parents? The most obvious influence derives from the fact that many young adults choose to live with their parents rather than to live on their own. Young adults in Western countries, in particular the northern Europe and the US tend to leave their parents and start living on their own at a relatively young age (Galland, 1995: 5-6). Young Japanese adults, however, tend to remain in their parents, unless it is necessary for them to live on their own (Yamada, 1999: 65). According to Yamada (1999: 60), the proportion of 'parasitic' singles who live with their parents to those who live on their own is 66% among men and 80% among women. Securing their own rooms in their parents' homes and their own salaries, they enjoy their 'luxurious' and carefree lives. Conversely, Miyamoto et al. (1997: 164) report that the number of children willing to take care of their parents is high among children in their 20s, and proves that these children receive much affection from their parents: they receive both emotional as well as financial support. It is very likely that those parents' hidden expectations of their children - that their children will take care of them 'emotionally' - will be met.

However, according to a survey, the percentage of Japanese high school students willing to take care of their parents in 'any' circumstance is the least out of China, the US, and Japan: 66%, 46% and 16% respectively (AERA Magazine, 5 August 1996 cited in Miyamoto et al., 1997: 80). This difference in consciousness seems to be related to the Japanese parents' unilateral and unconditional expression of love for their children. This results in some Japanese children taking for granted that they will enjoy their 'wealthy' lives regardless of whether or not their parents face financial difficulties (Miyamoto et al., 1997: 77). Others may not be confident about taking care of their parents, the expense, when they think about their own future lives - though they are interested in taking care of their parents. Considering that Japanese parents are among

those who devote themselves the most to their children, especially in terms of money (see, for example, Figure 2-1), it is clear that Japanese parents constantly play the role of givers, but not so much as receivers. Many believe they should not expect any return from their children and try not to bring any problems to their children in the future when they get old.

In short, many parents seem to be offering financial support in the belief that they should provide for their children. Thanks to this parental self-sacrifice, many Japanese - children, adolescents and young adults - appear to be fully taking advantage of their good future. However, such self-sacrifice often seriously compromises their children's future emotional as well as financial independence. Miyamoto et al. (1997: 206) suggest that today's young adults may not have the strength to face either economic hardship or the shrinking labour market which has already begun; they are particularly concerned with the lack of independence amongst women:

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power of parents increases their daughters' life chances. (Miyamoto et. al., 1997:13)

These concerns highlighted by Miyamoto and his colleagues together with the popularity of becoming a housewife among highly educated women (Madoka, 1988: 130; Aoki, 1990: 6; Ueno, 1994: 56; Yamada: 1999), shows a clear pattern. Women, who are offered clear 'advantages in life' by their parents, and by their fathers' in particular, try to maintain these advantages by marrying appropriate men. That is to say, their future husbands are in many ways father substitutes. Women recognises the limitations of their own abilities and opportunities to achieve such advantages; and their lack of independence is strongly related to not only to social norms and their own childhood experiences, but also to gender discrimination in the labour market.

### 2.3.4 Higher education

There is still a considerable gender difference among entrants to Japanese higher education. Overall 50% of women went on to higher educational institutions (two-year colleges and four-year universities) against 47% of men in 1998 (Horiuchi, 1999b: 138)<sup>14</sup>. Taking a close look at these, however, nearly half of all women students in tertiary education go to junior colleges, while most men go to universities. As one might expect, only a quarter of those in postgraduate education were women, at both MA and doctoral levels (25% at MA level and 24% at doctoral level). There is also a clear gender difference in the disciplinary areas: with considerably more women students in human sciences, home economics and education and fewer in engineering, regardless of study level (Horiuchi, 1999b: 138-139, 144-145; Toshitani et al., 1996: i, 26).

In Japan, which university you attend is of much greater importance than what you actually study when considering social recognition, and especially in terms of obtaining a position in a prestigious company (Dore, 1997: 48). However, women students who successfully enter prestigious universities do not necessarily have the same chance of a place at the best companies as their men counterparts (Wilson, 1991; Hattori, 1999b: 102). It is often said that the reason women have less opportunity to get the best jobs is because of their disciplinary areas (Tanaka and Nishimura, 1986: 211).<sup>14</sup> However, it is more a question of women's having less opportunity to get jobs than men because they are women being obscured by their tendency to choose their disciplinary areas according to interest than marketability.<sup>15</sup> It is a sign of their resignation to a sex discriminatory labour market that women choose disciplinary areas according to their interests rather than their marketability. It is gratifying that the proportion of women entering tertiary education increased dramatically from 5% in 1955 to 50% in 1998 (Amano, 1986b: 11; Horiuchi, 1999b: 138). However, as some feminists have pointed out, although higher education is open to girls, they still encounter various kinds of gender discrimination later on (Amano, 1986a: 1; Tanaka and Nishimura, 1986: 216; Stockman et al., 1995: 193; Islam, 1996: 166; Habu, 2000: 62). Although the

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<sup>14</sup> The International Labor Office (1981) reports the Japanese employment services as suggesting that companies are reluctant to hire women who studied law, economics, and engineering (cited in Namavar, 1984: 11).

<sup>15</sup> See Moses (1990), Leckey et al. (1995: 59), and Habu (2000: 61) for discussion on the relationship between disciplinary area and career prospects.

proportion of universities and junior colleges offering modules related to women's studies has increased, for example, to 29% in 1996, many women students are openly rebellious towards the lecturers on such courses (Fujieda, 1995; 28; Ida, 1995a: 32; The Nikkei, 25 October 1999). This is principally because they are unaware of the gender differences in the labour market until they had actually entered it. This contrasts with the much greater degree of equal opportunity they experience in education.

## **2.4 The indifference of the Japanese government to their nationals studying abroad**

The Japanese government has a unique policy that seeks mutual benefit for both higher education institutions and international students in Japan. This is called *Jumannin Ryugakusei Ukeire Seisaku* (the policy to host 100,000 international students) (see, for example, Ishizuki, 1989; Saito, 1990; Abe, 1996; and Skilbeck and Connell, 1996) and its guidelines were put into force in 1983-84 with the aim of receiving 100,000 international students by the early 21st century. The plan regards international students as cultural mediators who can stimulate the internationalisation of academic life and as being important for long-term diplomatic, cultural, commercial and developmental purposes (Saito, 1990: 37; Ninomiya, 1997: 33; Mombusho, 1998b: 490). However, there also seems to be a concurrent 'hidden' agenda: to make up for the decline in the enrolment of Japanese students by increasing the numbers of international students attracted by Japanese higher education institutions.<sup>16</sup> There are 588 junior colleges and 604 universities in Japan today (Mombusho, 1998a), but there has been a serious decline in enrolment since 1993 due to the demographic decline in the number of 18-year-olds.

The Japanese government has recently announced its intention to invest more money in recruiting international students to maintain student numbers (The Asahi, 4 January 2001)<sup>17</sup>. Financial and welfare services have been introduced, such as

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<sup>16</sup> Like Japan, host countries in general hardly discuss the role international students play as 'rescuers' for them. This kind of attitude is not peculiar to Japan, but often seen with other countries like the UK where the same demographic issue has occurred (Callan and Steele, 1991:14), and the US where the issue of 'cowboy colleges' of low quality which heavily depend on international student market has been serious (Burgh, 1984: 3).

<sup>17</sup> There is a claim that financial support for international students should not be limited to non-Japanese

scholarships, subsidies for medical expenses, and reduced tuition fees for both sponsored and self-funded students, all supported by the government (Mombusho, 1998b: 494-497). According to Ninomiya (1997: 33), '[t]he budget for foreign student policy including scholarships has been increased every year'. Conversely, the Japanese government appears now to have completely lost interest in dispatching their own nationals to foreign countries to acquire new knowledge and skills. Many Japanese people were sent abroad during the period from the end of the Tokugawa Era (1853-1868) to the mid-Meiji Era (the late 19th century).<sup>18</sup> Now, however, Japan wants to receive rather than send. Desperate to improve their universities, they ignore the existence of their own nationals who, as much as international students, could be used to improve their universities. Some say the Japanese government will not help its nationals to study abroad because this implies a denial of the quality of Japan's own education. However, there have been criticisms, from both inside and outside Japan, over the quality of Japanese universities, which are often seen as poor and inflexible (Regur, 1990, 22; Nakanishi, 1991 cited in Skilbeck and Connell, 1996; Ushiogi 1993; Uyeki, 1993: 36; Abe, 1996: 265). Japan is also seen as lagging behind the US and the UK, which are more advanced in certain disciplines and in their teaching styles.<sup>19</sup> There are obvious limits in improving Japanese universities through only importing international students. What is required is to make better use of Japan's own nationals: Japanese people who have the potential to make their universities better by importing advanced knowledge and skills acquired abroad.<sup>20</sup>

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but should also be applicable to those who are Japanese but born and brought up in foreign countries (Hashimoto, 19 October 2000).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Schwantes (1955) and Ishizuki (1985) for the history of Japanese study abroad.

<sup>19</sup> Regur (1990: 22), for example, states that '...American universities regard the environment where both academic staff and students improve the quality of education through the active exchange of opinions between the two parties as their ideal one. This is attractive to people who do not think that Japanese universities give them a sense of satisfaction or academic stimulation'.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the scholarship for students who study abroad provided by Japanese government is limited (see p. 198).

## **2.5 International and Japanese students in UK postgraduate education**

In 1997/98, 213,264 out of the total of 1,800,064 higher educational students (12%) in the UK were from abroad (the EU and elsewhere) (HESA, 1999: 5). At undergraduate level, 131,332 out of 1,413,063 (9%) were international students, rising to 81,932 out of the total of 387,001 (21%) among postgraduates.

**Table 2-2 International and Japanese students in UK academic institutions (1997/98) by level of study and gender\***

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Source: HESA (1999) pp. 5, 7-8. The data for Japanese students in 2000 throughout this thesis were supplied by SRHE by agreement with HESA.

### **2.5.1 Countries and areas of domicile**

Table 2-2 shows the number of international students decreases as the level of study becomes higher, particularly among women. The proportion of women postgraduate students has increased since 1992/93, from 34% to 41%, but it will probably be sometime before women make up 50% of international students. Moreover, the gender difference in the breakdown of postgraduate studies - comparing taught students and research students - is more significant than the one seen between undergraduate and postgraduate (see Section 2.5.2 for more detail). Amongst Japanese students in the UK, there are also more undergraduates than postgraduates, and the proportion of women decreases at higher levels. On the other hand, among Japanese students, the proportion of women is greater than that of men at both levels, though there are more than twice as many women among undergraduates and almost equal numbers of postgraduates.

**Table 2-3 Top twenty countries and areas of domicile of international students in UK higher education (1997/98) by level of study**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

Table 2-3 shows that countries sending the highest number of students tend to send a higher proportion of undergraduates to postgraduates. However, in the following 80 countries, the lower the ranking, the lower the proportion of undergraduates (HESA, 2000) - and these lower ranking countries are often developing countries. This is strongly related to the expansion of higher education in the two groups of countries. The desire (and pressure) to enter higher education is high in top ranking countries, such as Greece and Spain, but the number of university places does not meet the demand. In other countries there are enough university places for those who want them, but people try to enrol at the best or most suitable universities for them internationally, especially



people in the countries that developed later and where academic background plays a key role (Dore, 1997). In contrast, the main reason students from developing countries study abroad as postgraduates, rather than as undergraduates, is that those who go to higher education are still a minority group and are absorbed in undergraduate courses in their own countries. However, postgraduate study there is generally weak and they have to depend on foreign programmes (Bhalalusesa, 1998: 26) not only to train researchers but also for 'administrative, managerial and engineering staff for governments and industry' (Umakoshi, 1985: 159).<sup>21</sup>

Japan is the tenth country in terms of the number of its nationals studying in the UK and is a case of a developed country where postgraduate studies are generally not as mature as undergraduate studies in either quality or quantity.<sup>22</sup>

The following Table 2-4 shows the trend of the gender gap in international postgraduate students in the geographical origin of international students. Wright stresses firstly that 'the deficit of females is less marked among students from elsewhere in Europe than from the rest of the world' (Wright, 1997: 96),<sup>23</sup> secondly, that some sending countries provide fewer men than women students, and most of these are in European or OECD countries; and thirdly that women students from the Middle East, South Asia and Africa are significantly less represented (Wright, 1997: 96-97).

There are a number of reasons for the gender difference in relation to the geographical origin of international students, but one major reason is related to how much equality in education is accepted in each country. Women have equal access to education in the countries that have been sending at least as many women as men abroad. In contrast, women are treated differently from men in many developing countries in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, and low expectations of the intelligence and societal contribution of women often hinder women of those countries from studying abroad (Davis, 1997: 66; Wright, 1997: 96-98). Moreover, there is the disadvantageous effect of funding processes on women: many awards are given to people, often men, who are already advanced in their careers in the public sector for further training in these countries (Threfall and Langley, 1992: 28 cited in Leonard,

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<sup>21</sup> Umakoshi (1985) analyses additional reasons why students from Asian countries study abroad, and many of the reasons he raises seems to be applicable to both developed and developing countries.

<sup>22</sup> According to Yamamoto (1995: 123), 'graduate student enrolments were only 4.8 per cent of undergraduate enrolments [in Japan in 1991]'. Such a low enrolment suggests numerous problems in graduate schools in Japan. See Yamamoto (1995: 131) for further discussion.

1998c: 3).

**Table 2-4    Top twenty countries and areas of domicile of  
international postgraduate students in the UK (1997/98)  
by gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

Japan is one of the few countries and areas that send more women than men to postgraduate studies in the UK (along with Taiwan, Thailand and Israel). As discussed earlier, one of the main reasons for this gender difference is that Japanese women can go abroad much more easily than can men (see Section 2.3.1). Women are less

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<sup>23</sup> See also Jiang (1994: 240).

expected to enter life-long employment than men: women are less criticised for being unemployed or for working on a part-time basis than men, regardless of age. Many Japanese companies and organisations still operate the life-long employment and seniority system (Thomas, 1993: 54; Islam, 1997) which inhibits mobility among men.

## 2.5.2 Level of study

Men outnumber women among international students as a whole in the UK, and more men are at the higher levels of study, taking postgraduate diplomas, MAs, and doctoral courses. The proportion of men to women increases, as the level of study becomes higher. There is also a wide gap in the numbers between students at MA and those at doctorate level, especially among women, possibly because studies at MA level

**Table 2-5 International and Japanese postgraduate students at UK academic institutions (1997-98), by level of study and gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

\* This includes both of MPhil/PhD and PhD students. It is a regulation of the University of London that people who want to take PhD courses are initially registered as MPhil students, with some exceptions.

\*\* Postgraduate diplomas and certificates are regarded as part of postgraduate programmes in the UK, but the equivalent course does not exist in Japan. It is appropriate to consider postgraduate diplomas and certificates as preparatory courses for MAs.

Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

have attracted and been accessible to many people because of the variety of courses, wide range of entry requirements and the possibility of completing the courses in a relatively short period. In contrast, doctoral studies demand much more time and energy and are more expensive, especially for international students.

The same tendency is evident among Japanese students: the proportion of men increases as the level of study rises. However, the proportion of Japanese women to men is higher than that of international students as a whole, especially among diploma and MA students: overall 65: 47 at diploma level, 56: 43 at MA level, and 42: 34 at doctorate level. This suggests that while doctoral studies, especially in the sciences where funding is more widely available, is still largely men oriented, postgraduate diplomas and MAs are being chosen by more women. This further suggests the strong popularity of, and accessibility to, postgraduate courses abroad among Japanese women.

### 2.5.3 Mode of study

Table 2-6 shows that of the 81,932 international postgraduate students, 63% were following full-time postgraduate level programmes; i.e. nearly two out of three were full-time students. Indeed, international students have been required to study on a full-time basis by the Home Office, unless they have full-time jobs in their own countries, or

**Table 2-6 International and Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions (1997/98) by domicile and gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

\* Part-time includes other HE modes.  
Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

in the UK, or have family responsibilities.<sup>24</sup> This restriction contributes to the high percentage of international students who study on a full-time basis irrespective of gender. More men than women are in both full-time and part-time studies, reflecting the overall larger number of men students.

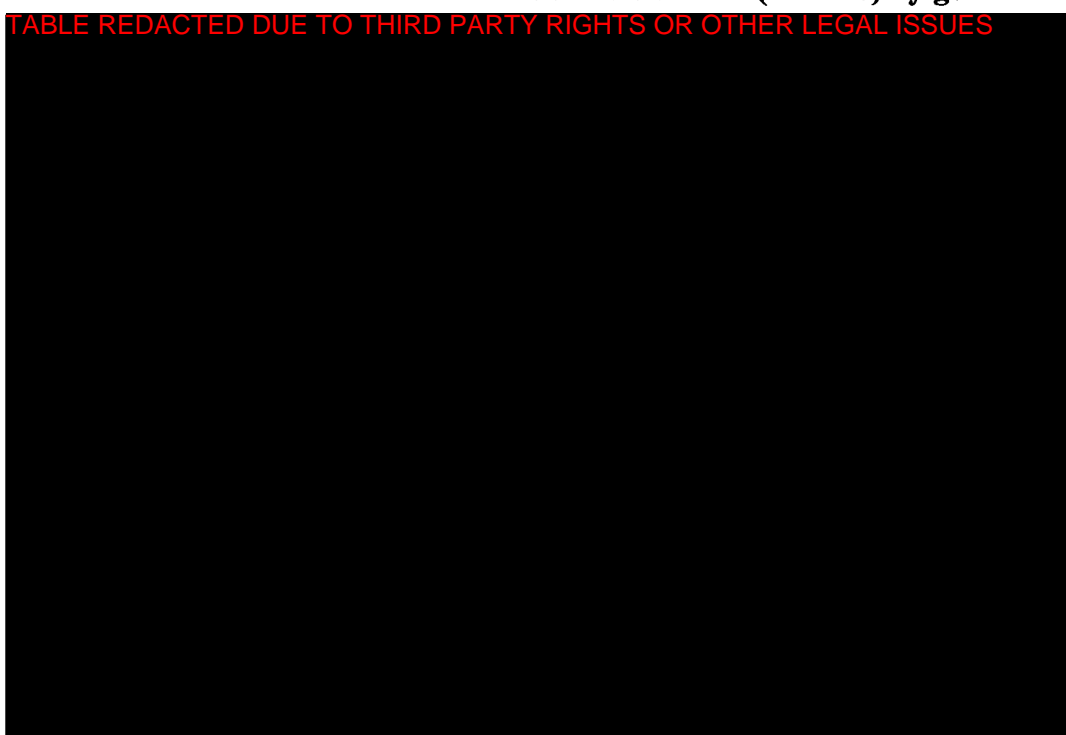
The same applies to Japanese students:<sup>25</sup> out of 2,499, 72% are full-time students, the majority of both women and men. However, the proportion of men is larger for part-time and smaller for full-time students, apparently because the number of men engaged in full-time work in the UK or Japan exceeds that of women.

#### **2.5.4 Subject area**

Of the top ten subject areas read by all international postgraduate students in the UK in 1997/98, women dominated in the arts, humanities and in 'helping' fields such as education and the health sciences (Davis, 1997: 71). Men outnumber in engineering,

**Table 2-7 Top ten subject areas read by international postgraduate students in UK academic institutions (1997/98) by gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

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<sup>24</sup> Also, it was only in 1995 that women students were given the same legal right as men to bring their spouses and children under 18 with them to the UK (UKCOSA, 1995 cited in Leonard, 1998c). See also Goldsmith and Shawcross (1985: 5) for further discussion on this issue.

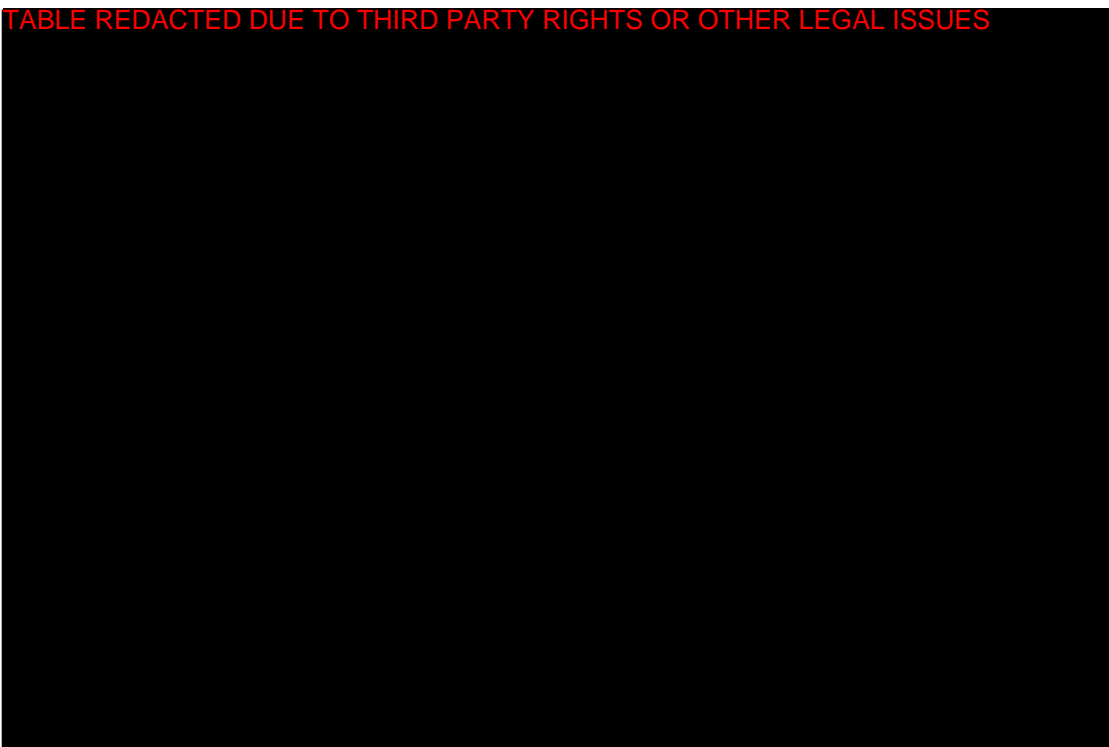
<sup>25</sup> See Appendix I-5 for the table by level of study, mode of study, and gender in 1997-98.

computer science and medicine as well as in business management, economics and politics. Since the subject areas studied by international students are often tied to national economic development and to the strength of the fields that the host country can offer, business management, economics, and law seem to be the subjects most needed in overseas countries (see also Section 2.1).

Among Japanese postgraduate students, business and management studies, politics, and economics were also highly ranked, but many other subjects taken by Japanese concentrated on the arts. As Todd Davis points out, Japan has 'a well established higher education system and advanced technologies, and the potential to compete in a global market', but its students in the US are 'more interested in fields that tap the social and cultural spheres than those directly related to economic and technical activities' (Davis, 1997: 66): arts, education and music. Also, more Japanese women than men study abroad, and many of the subjects in these fields are read more by women than by men (Tanaka and Nishimura, 1989; Sutherland, 1994). MBA and (international) economics courses are exceptionally popular among Japanese men students studying in both the US

**Table 2-8 Top ten subject areas read by Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions (1997/8) by gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

and the UK, because both subjects are much more developed in these countries (Ishizuki, 1990: 4; Regur, 1990: 23) and degrees from prestigious business schools or universities help with career development.<sup>26</sup>

### **2.5.5 Institution where studying**

‘Oxbridge’ continues to appeal to all international students because of its history and world-wide academic reputation for producing women and men of talent. Prospective students also choose institutions on the basis of friends or colleagues who had studied there and, in some cases, workplace links, especially where they depended on financial support from their employers. The number of overseas students an institution recruits is affected by the institution’s publicity and public reputation, the number of courses it runs which attract international students, the accessibility of the courses, and enrolment requirement. All the top institutions for international students

**Table 2-9 Top ten academic institutions for international postgraduate students in the UK (1997/98), by gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

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<sup>26</sup> However, there is also a view that the majority of those who are in MBA courses are those sent by their employers and their main aim is ‘to study American society and culture, acquire useful knowledge for business and information, and establish network’ (Ishizuki, 1990: 4).

are attended by more international men than women students; this applies until the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 33rd place, which has 448 women and 305 men.

Jarvis (1997: 7) says that the UK tends to disdain educational agents, when compared to Australia, where active marketing for international students has been developed. However, the situation and attitudes in the UK seem to be changing rapidly, and following the trends taken by Australia. There has been a changed emphasis from seeing international education as a means to promote aid and trade, to seeing education as a 'product' for sale in and of itself. The promotion of British higher education has moved a long way since an informal consortium of several universities, including Durham and Newcastle participated in an overseas market investigation and promotion mission to the Far East and Kuwait for the first time in 1984 (Burgh, 1984: 8; The Independent, 2 December 1999). Advertisements in the press have increased and there is keen competition to obtain more students, domestically as well as internationally.

**Table 2-10 Top ten institutions for Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic (1997/98), by gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.



Oxford and Cambridge are also among the top ten institutions for Japanese postgraduate students, but rank a little lower, though all ten are well known and prestigious. Many are part of the University of London, and LSE exceeds all other universities.

The recent 'massification of study abroad' is sometimes criticised by Japanese scholars (see, for example, Kitamura, 1990: 155). However, the fact that many Japanese postgraduate students are accepted by these high-ranked institutions shows they are not studying abroad because they 'can't make it' in Japan. They are able to demonstrate high marks at BA, diplomas and/or master's level as well as high scores in TOEFL or IELTS, both of which are admission requirements. On the other hand, as stated earlier, it cannot be denied that there is a tendency that not 'what' but 'where' Japanese people study is important for them and their associates (see Section 2.3.4). The consistent proportion of Japanese students in these well-known institutions may be a reflection of Japanese overemphasis on academic background, but it also suggests that British universities with little prestige will have real difficulty in attracting Japanese students.<sup>27</sup>

More Japanese men than women tend to study at 'Oxbridge', but even numbers at LSE and women outnumber men at SOAS (which has a variety of courses on Linguistics). Moreover, the numbers of Japanese women and men are more balanced as a whole in the top 10 institutions than is the case with other international students.

### **2.5.6 Ages of international and Japanese postgraduate students**

International postgraduate students are concentrated in the 21-39 year-old age group, and especially in the 21-25 group, regardless of gender.<sup>28</sup> The older the age group, the smaller the number of both women and men, but the decrease is greater with women, especially between the 26-29 and 30-39. More women students are probably concerned with marriage and childbearing and so some rush to study abroad before they reach their late 20s or early 30s, depending on their countries' norms. Women also find

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<sup>27</sup> As to the overemphasis on academic background in Japan, see, for example, Section 2.2.1, Shimbori and Kano (1987), and Horio (1988: 299), Amano (1992), Dore (1997), and Ihara (2000).

<sup>28</sup> The age group shown in the figure is made in accordance with the classification in the data supplied by SRHE. However, it is a little confusing that the age groups are 21-25, 26-29, 30-39, 40-49 etc. The average number in each age is specified, which is helpful to make a comparison of the average numbers of international students among different age groups.

it more difficult to study abroad once they get married and have their children than men, because of women's role in the home and the expectation that they will live where their husbands work. In contrast, men students are often more vocationally-oriented; and they are also freer to study abroad regardless of marital status, because their wives take care of domestic life while they themselves study. Men also tend to be given opportunities to study abroad by their employers, several years after they enter their jobs. All of which contributes to the number of men students declining less with age; and also probably to men being more likely to involve themselves in higher level studies, which tend to be done at a later age.

**Table 2-11 International postgraduate students in UK academic institutions (1996/97), by age group and gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

The numbers of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK show both commonality with and difference from international postgraduate students in general. They show similarities in that most are aged 21 to 39, with a sudden decrease after the age of 40. However, while the number of Japanese women also decreases with age, the decline is less than that of women international students as a whole, with women tending to take MA courses when aged 21-29. In contrast, men take them when aged 26-39, although, as will be explained later, the number of men who are 36 or over seems to be small.

The gender difference is seen in the change in numbers, as students get older. The number of men increases in the 26-29 age group in comparison with those aged 21-25.

Men are concentrated in the 26-29 age group, suggesting they tend to work for a while after getting a first degree, and then go back to study in order to advance their career or to change their occupations. Unlike Japanese women, men students tend to wait for the appropriate time to study abroad.

**Table 2-12 The number of Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions (1996/97) by age group and gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Source: Data supplied by SRHE/HESA.

Some caution is required, however, because although the number of men decreases from 26-29 to 30-39 years old - giving the impression that most men students study abroad at the age of 26-29, but fewer after that age - this drop is difficult to analyse. Men students could actually be concentrated in their early 30s (rather than late 30s), but the statistics do not allow one to distinguish this. From my daily observation, there are fewer men (and women) students in their late 30s than early 30s. If this is indeed the case, then the number of men students in their early 30s may be nearly equal to those aged 26-29.

This suggests four points. Firstly, Japanese men like other international students, are less aware of the social clock in relation to marriage and tend to delay marriage until they feel financially prepared (Ehara, 1988: 179; Hogan and Mochizui, 1988 cited in Schaie and Willis 1996). Secondly, men are much less affected by their marital status when they study abroad. Thirdly, men students tend to have more opportunity to study abroad to learn market-related subjects such as Economics and MBAs, sponsored by

their employers including private firms and governmental institutions. Fourthly, it is also almost essential for medical doctors and researchers in the fields of biology (where men predominate) to study abroad to gain prestige. Moreover, as an interesting peculiarity of the Japanese, there are twice as many women students aged 21-25 as men. This seems to be the effect of a social norm which makes women less pressured to be economically independent than men. More women have therefore financially supportive parents and can more easily study abroad at young age than men. They are also not as desperate as men to make use of the best chance to enter a large or prestigious company when they are new graduates (see Section 2.3.1 for further discussion).

Considering that the absolute number of Japanese students on doctorate courses is small (280) (see Table 2-5), the number of men aged between 26-39 (719) is remarkable and may be due to men tending to take MA courses when they are older than is the case for women.

## **2.6 Summary**

Important points emerge from this chapter which will be further explored in Chapter 3. First, trends in studying abroad tend to mirror national needs, but many students from developed countries are self-funded and study abroad for personal reasons: personal as well as career advancement. Those from developing countries tend to be sponsored and to study abroad more in accordance with national policy. Women students tend to be less vocationally-oriented and to studying humanities and arts courses, which have little to do with their anticipated future careers. Men students tend to study business, economics, science, and engineering, which are more strongly vocationally related.

The most popular destination for studying abroad for Japanese people is the US followed by China and the UK. Due to the appreciation of the yen and the individualisation of budgets within the family, the number of Japanese people who can study abroad has been increasing. Despite this, those who have lived and/or studied abroad still experience hostile bias and exclusion, and often encounter difficulties in readjusting themselves and looking for jobs on their return to Japan.

The proportion of Japanese women who go on to junior colleges and universities has been increasing. However, the proportion of women who go on to universities is still relatively low, and there are clear gender differences in the subject area studied by Japanese students. There is strong resistance to women's studies among undergraduate students.

Strong discrimination against women persists in the labour market in Japan. Half of all highly educated women engage in clerical jobs, and many of them make full use of their circumstances - transient work with low expectations but also little restriction from their employers - by travelling abroad and conspicuous consumption. In contrast, men white-collar workers are often so restricted by their work they cannot spare time even for their own interest. Some men feel pressured to be breadwinners and feel oppressed by the exploitative demands of their employers. The ideological belief that good parents devote themselves to their children's happiness makes it more likely that Japanese children can study abroad with financial help from their parents.

Sex discrimination pushes women into marriage. In particular, highly educated women, who have often been financially and emotionally (overly) protected by their wealthy parents, prefer to marry 'elite' men and become housewives in preference to engaging in life-long employment. In which case, husbands take over from fathers in respect of financial support.

The Japanese government is much more interested in receiving international students from other countries than in sending their own nationals to foreign countries. Japan is one of the few countries that send more of its nationals to the UK for undergraduate studies than for postgraduate studies. Unlike international students from other countries, there is a higher proportion of Japanese women than men at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, although this is less marked at postgraduate level and reverses at doctoral level. On the one hand, the proportion of women is a manifestation of equality in education; but on the other, the fact that more Japanese women than men look for other interests or opportunities abroad indicates the low expectations for women in the labour market.

Most international and Japanese students in the UK study full-time, regardless of gender. The proportion of Japanese women students who study full-time is higher than any other group: than international women students generally, international men students, or Japanese men students. Both international students generally and Japanese

students show clear gender difference in subject areas, but both Japanese women and men tend to study art subjects.

Unlike international students who favour 'Oxbridge' among UK institutions, Japanese students especially favour the University of London and the LSE. Moreover, the proportion of Japanese women to men is higher in most academic institutions, including the LSE.

Most international students and Japanese students are aged between 21-39. Among international students, the number of students decreases with age, regardless of gender and the number of women decreases more quickly than men. A similar tendency is recognised among Japanese students, but the largest number of men students are between 26-29 (or perhaps 30-34), because many men work for a while after graduation and study abroad later. In contrast, most women study abroad when younger.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Background to the present study**

This study takes a different and innovative approach to the study of international students. This chapter will first present an overview of existing literature on international students in the US, the UK, and Australia; and then describe how I came to conduct this study. In the process, I hope to achieve three goals: first to provide an idea of the general approaches to international students in the UK; second is to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses; and finally to highlight the objectives of this thesis and how it differs from existing work.

#### **3.1 Studies of international students in the UK**

The words 'international', 'internationalisation', 'global', 'globalisation' and 'mobility' are used more and more frequently in studies of contemporary life. For example, Busch (1997) states that the number of articles in academic and popular literature with 'globalization/global' in the title has increased almost threefold in the past decade (cited in Urry, 1998: 5). Also the quantity of literature on education which makes international comparisons has also increased (see, for example, Clark, 1993; OECD, 1995; Blumenthal et al., 1996; Currie and Newson, 1998), as has the mobility of students and staff. For instance, as noted in the introduction, various programmes and schemes have been developed to further international co-operation between higher education institutions today; and many countries are making efforts to promote student mobility by establishing innovative systems of course delivery and specialist programmes.

However, there seems to be a gap in how international mobility is understood, between national and individual levels. From the standpoint of the nation, one purpose of promoting international mobility among students is to stimulate certain intellectual and attitudinal developments in individuals, since such mobility accelerates the understanding by each individual country of other countries in addition to disciplinary

and/or professional advancement (Baumgratz-Gangl, 1996: 104-105). Another purpose is to induce institutional development, as for example with Japan's *Jumannin Ryugakusei Ukeire Seisaku* (The policy to host 100,000 international students) discussed in Section 2.4.

From the individual international student's point of view, however, what international mobility means is often different, except perhaps where students are sent by their governments specifically to acquire new knowledge and skill for the development of their own countries. For individual students, the purpose of their international mobility often has little to do with the development of their nations (Useem and Useem, 1955:10): they are primarily interested in fulfilling their own purposes and they may have a wide range of priorities.

For instance, while some people expect to expand their horizons by experiencing international mobility and others hope to acquire international competence in their studies or careers, some leave for foreign countries because of dissatisfaction with or bitter experiences in their home countries (Oropeza, 1991; 281). An interesting case is those who drift into studying abroad at the postgraduate level as a result of dissatisfaction with their current situations or fear of expected hardship in the future.<sup>29</sup> Generally speaking, studying abroad also offers people the chance to improve their language proficiency and to expand their horizons through experiencing foreign cultures. Those people who 'drift' into studying abroad, especially at postgraduate level, have often visited a country as a tourist or attended short language courses there, and feel something lacking and a sense of dissatisfaction. They seek something additional - stimulating, challenging, and adventurous - especially in the intellectual sense. Moreover, study abroad at postgraduate level can be attractive in other ways. For example, individuals hope that a foreign degree with scarcity value will give them an advantage in a crowded home labour market; while being accepted by 'foreign postgraduate schools' boosts students' self-esteem and status. Their foreign travel is more highly regarded by people at home, since they are neither aimless wanderers, nor are they proposing to attend 'mere' language courses.

However, there are some who expect nothing other than short-term enjoyment from studying abroad. For instance, well-educated Japanese women who study abroad

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<sup>29</sup> See Burgess (1995: 149) on students who drift into a research degree in the UK.



at postgraduate level are not always interested in career advancement (Habu, 2000: 52). For them, the degree is often no more than 'a visible proof' of their hard work in the process of their own fulfilment. In other words, studying abroad at the postgraduate level is no more than educational tourism for a certain elite. Individual desire to achieve their full 'potential' by successfully completing the demanding tasks required by their courses, and to become more sophisticated through having observed and experienced foreign education. This, in many ways, parallels the eighteenth century 'Grand Tour'<sup>30</sup> (Urry, 1990: 4-5; Craik, 1997: 119) whose aim was initially 'to prepare young gentlemen for diplomatic careers, for which ... depth of acquaintance [with European people and sites] was prerequisite' (Hibbert, 1969 cited in Craik, 1997: 119). However, as time passed, Grand Tour 'treatises on travel' shifted from scholastic emphasis on touring as an opportunity for discourse, to travel as eyewitness observation (Urry, 1990: 4). Similarly, study abroad at postgraduate level seems for some also to have shifted from scholastic purposes to witnessing and experiencing foreign cultures.

Existing literature on international students, including that on international postgraduate students, has, however, only examined studying abroad within the perspective of study or education. It has paid little attention to the diversity of what international students expect from their study abroad or to what studying abroad means to them, aside from its educational aspects. In this thesis, I am arguing that studying abroad has various meanings to individuals and I shall highlight its personal as well as educational meanings.

The current literature for and on international students can be roughly classified into four groups: (1) 'advice' literature for international students and those associated with them, (2) official statistics, (3) international education policy statements and programmes, and (4) academic research-based publications.

### **3.1.1 'Advice' literature**

There is a range of 'advice' literature providing international students with an array of useful information, as well as guidance on how to make the most out of living in the UK. Similar publications also exist for staff working with international students - not

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<sup>30</sup> The Grand Tour was established for the sons of aristocracy and the gentry at the end of the seventeenth century and for sons of professional or middle class by the late eighteenth century (Urry 1990: 4).

just accommodation officers or course tutors, but all members of staff who deal with international students - providing guidance on teaching and communications. These publications are often produced by the British Council and UKCOSA: the Council for International Education.<sup>31</sup>

The British Council was established in 1934 to promote cultural, technical and educational co-operation between the UK and the world.

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ation in the world as a valued  
world-wide with programmes  
(The British Council, 1999:

<http://www.britcoun.org/who/index.htm>)

Its education section 'promotes' education in the UK by providing useful information for students' abroad who are considering whether to start or to continue their studies in the UK. Its publications offer general information, for example, *Studying and Living in Britain* (1998), *The 2000/2001 International Students A-Z Guide to London* (2000), and others on graduate studies, for example, *The British PhD, and the Overseas Student* (1986) and *The British Master's Degree* (2000), in association with Committee for International Co-operation in Higher Education. However, the Council remit does not extend to international students who have already begun their studies in the UK nor has it yet conducted a survey on students who have studied abroad through its own award schemes.

UKCOSA was established in 1968 with the aim of looking after the needs and promoting the interests of international students in the UK and those working with them. It offers advice and training for the latter and, in partnership with the University of Nottingham, qualifications. Until the late 1980s UKCOSA used to publish occasional papers that reflected students' voices, for example, *Suffering for Success* (1979), *It Ain't Half Sexist Mum: Women as Overseas Students in the United Kingdom* (1985, in co-operation with the World University Service), and *Overseas Students: At Home in Britain?* (1987). However, in the last decade, UKCOSA has switched to producing more practical and 'profitable' publications and training materials. For international

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<sup>31</sup> The institution changed its name from the United Kingdom Council for Overseas Students Association in 1993 in order to extend its remit to cover UK students studying abroad and broader issues of

students, there are publications with useful information and guidance on how to make life easy: *Arriving in the UK* (2000) and *Council Tax and International students* (2000). For staff, there are practical guides and resource/training materials, such as *Orientation Within the Institution: A DIY Guide to Welcoming International Students* (1992), and *UKCOSA Manual 2000* (2000).

Both UKCOSA and the British Council have contributed to helping international students in practical ways and the issues they focus on are mainly preparatory, immigration, information on course content, accommodation, health, cultural/social, financial, and study issues. For staff who working with international students, the central issues they discuss are 'orientation' and modes of teaching and communication with international students. However, a fundamental problem in these publications is how much institutions understand the actual variety of experience of international students through a lack of a research base (Niven, 1987a; 2-3; Aboutorabi, 1995; 55). The advice offered therefore can only be generalised and not specific in relation to level of study, national culture of origin or gender. It is consequently rather repetitive and bland, especially since both organisations try to cover issues relating to as many groups of students as possible. One might ask whether the UK 'advice' literature is really concerned about the actual problems of international students, since, as Langmead writes of the Australian context:

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limited to concerns about which the *universities* want to know. (Langmead, 1998: 8)

The priorities for the countries which receive international students are largely their own benefit and needs. Like Australia, the UK has offered 'customer care' to international students, but within the limitations of its interests as a host nation (Altbach, 1990 cited in Baumgratz-Gangl, 1996: 104). It is surprisingly uncommon for UK universities (or researchers) to develop strategies by listening to students<sup>32</sup> - despite the recruitment benefits this might bring them. As a result, there is little 'advice' literature

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internationalisation, as well as the interests of international students in the UK.

<sup>32</sup> Kinnell (1990) is one of a few studies that try to make use of students' voices to improve recruitment strategies. Ryan and Zuber-Skerritt (1999) also seek ways to improve the academic environment for non-English speaking background students by listening to their views.

that really answers the concerns of international students and staff who work with them, and the literature has made little impact on the administrative policies.

In addition to the literature from UKCOSA or the British Council, there are also advice publications produced by individuals or groups of scholars. However, most of these are written 'for' and 'by' 'staff' and based on the (limited) knowledge they have acquired through teaching or dealing with international students 'in daily life' (see, for example, Aboutrabi, 1995; Wright, 1997; Furnham, 1997; Humfrey, 1999; Ryan, 2000). The international students concerned appear to have lives limited to the campus - no family relationships, friends or jobs to earn money. 'Advice' literature 'for international students' that reflects their own voices is extremely limited (Curtis, 1994 cited in Aboutrabi, 1995:55).

There is also a problem in so far as it is unusual for a book to focus on 'international students in graduate studies' and to look at issues specific to them (though see Allen and Higgins, 1994; McNamara and Harris, 1997). Their problems (and advantages) are assumed to consist simply of a combination of the issues for international students and for graduate studies in general. However, this is dangerous, as Leonard says of international women students:

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completion, and overall standards. (Leonard, 1998b: 27)

A multi-faceted approach to international students in graduate studies is needed to deepen staff understanding of those students and to improve orientation, teaching and communication. Failure to take account of the specificity of information receivers - of undergraduates and postgraduates, men and women - will 'result in generalised information for the generic international student' (Langmead, 1998: 10). Certainly, the advice and information which I found in the various texts I consulted as an international student myself during my study was often what I was already familiar with from other

literature, and not particularly useful or realistic (Aboutrabi, 1995: 56; Mullins et al., 1995: 208). Such literature needs to try to understand the state of these students better through conducting fieldwork and listening to their voices on the issues, which they are facing. And it also needs to make the 'advice' more specific to smaller groups of students, for example, undergraduates or postgraduates, women or men. Both requirements are also central to encouraging more international students to come to the UK, which is a major interest for the country (The Independent, 2 December 1999; THES, 28 July 2000).

### **3.1.2 Statistical literature**

Statistics on international students in UK higher education are usually taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), although statistics produced by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are also available. HESA was set up 'by agreement between the relevant government departments, the Higher Education Funding Councils and the universities and colleges, in 1993' (HESA, 1996: inside front cover) as a special data collection agency for higher education. It receives a variety of data, for example, on students, staff, and finance, from all UK higher education institutions and publishes these annually as well as analysing and publishing reports on trends in higher education. HESA will also extract a specific set of statistics to order, and one can obtain statistically useful and reliable data for one's own use.

However, there are two serious problems regarding the statistics on UK higher education.

- Firstly, there is a difficulty in providing a historical base, since the institutions dealing with the data changed with the amalgamation of the Universities' Statistical Record (USR, 'old' university sector) and the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA, former polytechnics) into HESA, following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. Also, the base for the statistics changed. USR tended to focus on full-time international student only, so it is difficult to establish trends in former part-time international students.

- Secondly, the information on international students is limited. For example, the analysis of these students by USR was limited to 'country of domicile' (see, for

example, USR, 1994) and although the situation improved after HESA took over in 1993, further improvement has been slow. Statistics on international students have been limited to gender, domicile, location of institutions, and level of course, with limited cross-tabulation, since they published the first edition of their major report, *Students in Higher Education Institutions 1994/95*, in 1996.

The UK is thus far behind the US in its database on international students, since the Institute of International Education (IIE), founded in 1919, has conducted a statistical survey since 1948. While HESA is in charge of producing statistics on both home and international students, the IIE specialises. While HESA's major annual report, *Students in Higher Education Institutions*, allows only a few pages for international students, IIE's major annual report, *Open Doors*, spares an entire book and even attaches a disk for more information on the back cover. Detailed analysis of the data is added, and gives much more insight into international students (see, for example, *Open Doors 1996-1997: Report on International Educational Exchange* edited by Davis published in 1997). IIE will also extract a specific set of statistics for one's own use.

Neither UNESCO nor OECD produces detailed statistics on postgraduate students. They refer only to the numbers of international students by country of origin, and not by gender, level of study or subject. It is also entirely dependent on individual countries how and from what perspectives the numbers are analysed.<sup>33</sup> If a particular country does not produce high quality or detailed statistics, there is no alternative source.

### 3.1.3 Publications on international educational policy and programmes

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(Unterhalter, 1997; 9)

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<sup>33</sup> There is also a fundamental question about who are counted as 'home' and 'international' students in these countries, because the definition of the categories differs from one country to another, for example,

Unterhalter is surprised at the over attention to educational policy and the specific lack of attention to learning and teaching relationships. My problem with the policy literature is somewhat different. It is that overall policy- and programme-makers who host international students, and the staff who deal with them, proceed with their arguments as if they already knew a lot about those students. They appear to believe that they do not need to explore the state of international students through any special fieldwork. As a result, they simply amend theories on international students, which have been produced by other scholars that were also based on limited knowledge. They have not understood the importance of grasping what international students really expect from study abroad and what they perceive, feel, and think during their stay. Nor have they realised that students face different issues depending on their individual backgrounds, what they study, at what academic level, whether they are women or men, single or married, and their age and (dis)ability.

Some may argue that international students are not 'customers' who are always right, and that academics are not responsible for providing students with all that they require, and indeed that students may not know what is best for them. Certainly there is excessive amount of publication on international student policy and programmes reflecting the host countries' and academic institutions' perspectives compared with research-based work on the actual situation of international students. This suggests that international students be expected to follow what UK higher education institutions have decided to provide (Leonard, 1998b: 32). However, if this attitude persists, the UK risks losing international students even if it has not faced a serious decrease in the number of international students for a long time.<sup>34</sup>

In this respect, the US seems to be far more advanced than the UK. The number of international students in the US is proportionately much greater and its popularity is partly due to its high political and economic status in the world. However, status is not everything, and the US has never over relied on it. Rather the IIE has made tremendous contribution in grasping and publicising trends among international students. There has been enthusiastic engagement in studies on international students as well as working in

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the UK, France, and Germany.

<sup>34</sup> The UK lost some 3,000 international students in 1979/80 due to the rise of tuition fees enforced in 1975, and continued to lose them until 1984/85 (Else and Kinnell, 1990: 2). It lost a further 8,000 in 1998/99 due to the decline in recruitment from major sending countries: Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (THES, 11 February 2000).

co-operation, not only with institutions of higher education, but also, for example, with the Bureau of Education, the Cultural Affairs of the United States Information Agency, the TOEFL Policy Council, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. The networking is powerful.

### **3.1.4 Research-based publications**

Useem and Useem, who conducted a qualitative research study on Indians who studied abroad in the UK and the US nearly half a century ago, referred to the difference in national character of the British and Americans as follows:

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than Americans. (Useem and Useem, 1955: 15)

The authors compare complacent British attitudes with the Americans who felt the need to inform these people about the American way of life, and to eliminate anti-American attitudes in India. Many years have passed and British attitudes towards foreigners have changed much: a good example is the establishment of UKCOSA. However, the number of research-based publications on international students is still small, and many are limited to small-scale studies of the researchers' own university: e.g. Rogers and Smith (1992) of the University of Southampton, Cunliffe (1993) of the University of Plymouth, Li et al. (1997) of the University of Portsmouth. There are various possible reasons for this absence. Many academics are neither really interested in the lives of their international students (Niven, 1987b; Aboutrabi, 1995: 57); nor probably in those of home students either. Nor are they interested in the non-academic aspects of their lives (and indeed there are arguments against teachers knowing too much about or getting too involved with their students' personal lives). Some may think it is the responsibility of international students to adjust to the British educational system, and that the British do not have to try to gain international students' favour (Niven, 1987a: 11). A more telling reason is doubtless that it is time and energy consuming to conduct fieldwork and to analyse the collected data.





The only group of international students which has been extensively studied is those who study abroad through the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS, latter SOCRATES). 'The ERASMUS programmes were established by the Council Decision of 15 June 1987, with the aim of increasing the number of mobile students within the European community' (Teicher and Maiworm, 1994: vii).<sup>35</sup> As the programme developed, a number of empirical reports on ERASMUS students have been published. As Unterhalter (1997: 9) points out, these reports are unusual and important particularly in respect of their size because '(other) researches tend to draw on small studies in single institutions'. Most of the researchers have been employed on a contract basis with the European Commission for years and are therefore certainly experts in researching international students from EU countries. Also financial backing from the Commission enables them to conduct large-scale research and to publish in the major EU countries. Given the overwhelming reputation of this research and the lack of equivalent research on students outside of these programmes, the ERASMUS findings tend to be regarded as characterising all international students' lives in EU countries, with little questioning (see, for example, Altbach, 1990; Baumgratz-Gangl, 1996; Brennan, 1997; Leonard, 1998b).

However, there are serious problems with the ERASMUS reports. The research is always conducted by researchers appointed by the commission, and often within a limited framework. As a result, there are 'blind-spots' which the researchers have not surveyed, and which other scholars have also not studied because they have not perceived them, or because there is no funding available, or because they prefer pointing out the 'blind-spots' in the ERASMUS research to investigating the areas themselves. But these 'blind-spots' can cause serious gaps in understanding between on the one hand international students, and on the other staff who work with them as well as researchers and policy-makers.

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<sup>35</sup> See Brennan (1997) for further information.

## **3.2 Methodological shortcomings of existing studies**

Since the ERASMUS studies are the main large-scale studies of international students in the UK, it is worth considering their shortcomings in some detail, as well as those of some small case-based accounts, so as to explain my concerns and the research targets of this thesis.

### **3.2.1 Lack of attention to differences in academic levels**

The majority of students who study abroad on ERASMUS programme are undergraduates, which means that most available reports on international students are undergraduates. Other reports on international students often lump undergraduates and postgraduates together as a single group (see, for example, Klineberg and Hull IV 1979; Kinnell 1990; Li et. al. 1997; Rogers and Smith, 1992). However, while there may be elements in common between the lives of postgraduates and undergraduates, they are certainly not the same. For example, their ages, marital status, means of financial support, purposes in studying abroad, their reasons for choosing courses, and career expectations are all likely very different. As a result, the kinds of issues and the degrees of pressure facing the two are also likely to be different. There are, however, few reports whose subjects are only postgraduate students, and those which do exist do not generally differentiate postgraduate diploma, master's and doctoral students (though see Regur, 1990; Uyeki, 1993; Bhalalusesa, 1998).

### **3.2.2 Lack of attention to gender**

It is more than fifteen years since Goldsmith and Shawcross produced a pioneering research-based report on women as overseas students in the United Kingdom, *It Ain't Half Sexist Mum* in 1985. The authors pointed to the lack of data on the whole subject of international women students, and the tendency to treat international students 'as "genderless" or rather as being typically single, young and male' (Goldsmith and Shawcross, 1985: 5). Today surveys of international students are still rarely analysed by gender, much less by gender and ethnicity or race, age and level of study (though see Verthelyi, 1995: 389; Wright 1997: 94). Where gender is referred to, the reference is extremely limited.

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graduate studies. (Leonard, 1998b: 26-27)

Goldsmith and Shawcross (1985) describe such work as 'genderless', Wright (1997) as 'gender-blind', Leonard (1998b) as 'not gender-sensitive', and Callan (1999) and Langmead (1998) as 'gender-neutral'. However, all agree there are differences in the experiences of women and men students - in, for example, their relationships with teaching staff, homesickness, sources of mental and financial support, domestic responsibilities, social life, and welfare needs. I argue there are also other personal issues where women and men students systematically differ - for example, in their relationships with parents and friends, the pressures on them to be financially independent, on their concerns on age and marriage - and that these issues greatly affect their educational lives.

Both Leonard (1998b) and Callan (1999) have made specific criticisms of *The ERASMUS experience: major findings of the ERASMUS Evaluation Research Project* by Teichler and Maiworm (1997) and are unhappy with these authors' evaluation that 'female students hardly differed from male students in their expectations, their study activity reports and in their assessment of the results and impact of the ERASMUS-supported study period abroad' (Teichler and Maiworm, 1997: 39). Callan complains, 'On this basis the authors of the analysis detect no significant gender issue in the take up of the opportunities offered by the ERASMUS programme' (Callan 1999:2). Leonard remarks that 'they saw no need to comment further on gender, and referred to it only in the section analysing the careers of former ERASMUS students' (Leonard 1998b: 28). Viz:

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Both Leonard and Callan criticise the overall lack of cross-tabulations of topics by gender in this and in all their many other reports on ERASMUS students (for example, Teichler and Maiworm 1994; Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Teichler 1997). Instead, the reports present Table after Table of cross-tabulations by countries. On the one hand, their approach is understandable given that the object of the ERASMUS programme is 'significantly to increase the proportion of students at higher education institutions in Europe, spending a period of study in another EU Member State and to improve the quality of higher education in Europe through co-operative activities' (Maiworm et al., 1993: 9). Their funders, the European Commission, are also principally interested in the mobility of member nationals (as homogeneous groups) between EU countries (Neave, 1992). The focus of research on ERASMUS students is therefore bound primarily to gauge the relatively mobility of students from different member states, former ERASMUS students' assessment of the programme, and their thoughts on their life studying abroad, so as to justify and develop the programme. On the other hand, given the EU commitment to equal opportunities, if there are topics for which differences between women and men should be taken into account, they should have been noted, especially if, as Callan suggests when reviewing Teichler and Maiworm (1997), they bear on the central purposes of the scheme:

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1999: 2)

It does not even always get noticed that, apart from students from a few developed countries, including Japan, the numbers of international men students in the UK are

greater (sometimes markedly greater) than the numbers of women (Wright, 1997: 97)<sup>36</sup> - a gender difference which suggests women face more social, political, legal, and economic obstacles to studying abroad in many home countries than do men. Referring to the report by AIEF and Morgan, Langmead states:

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(Langmead, 1998: 17)

In addition, we should bear in mind, first, the strong possibility that some women who achieve their ambition to study abroad continue to confront a number of gender issues during their stay overseas and also after they complete their courses (Maudeni, 1999: 29). Fulfilling a wish to study abroad is not necessarily the end of hardship. We should also bear in mind that gender-specific barriers may be faced not only by women but also by men. If there are countries where men students are systematically less likely to study abroad than women, then this suggests men face pressing issues (as, for example, Japanese men facing stronger pressure than women to become financially independent and to work for a single employer from graduation until retirement - see Section 2.3.1). Amongst both women and men, there are some that realise their dreams of studying abroad, while others cannot.

### **3.2.3 Lack of attention to students' personal lives**

Even when some people eventually achieve their ambition to study abroad and overcome various barriers, they may still encounter many issues in their personal as well as their educational lives.<sup>37</sup> Personal issues - family roles, domestic responsibilities, friendships, pressure to be financially independent, and concerns about marriage and age - may in fact be as demanding as educational ones. However, most existing studies

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<sup>36</sup> This applies also to the US and Australia. There are more men students studying in the US from all countries except Japan, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, (Davis, 1997: 70); while in Australia the numbers of international men students in postgraduate studies was double the number of women students in 1997 (AIEF and Morgan 1997 cited in Langmead, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> The division between educational life and personal life is obviously somewhat arbitrary, but I define educational life as 'life strongly related to academic engagement' and personal life as 'outside educational life'. See Chapter 7 for further discussion.

on international students have only paid attention to issues in educational life - to language problems, learning difficulties, and the appropriateness of course programmes and of teaching. It is as if international students did nothing apart from study (see, for example, Niven, 1987; Kinnell, 1990; Oppen, 1990; Li et al., 1997).<sup>38</sup> International students' personal lives may appear uninteresting or simply irrelevant to the researchers' interests, which may be primarily concerned with the improvement of programmes, courses, and teaching. Though some have focused on the problems of adjustment for international students (see, for example, Church, 1982; Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Altbach, 1989b; Ballard, 1989; Schütze, 1989; Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Rohlich and Marton, 1991; Maundeni, 1999); often with a pathological view which suggests there is something wrong with students if they cannot adjust (David, 1971; Thomas and Althen, 1989). Others have focused on former international students' thoughts on their studying abroad after they have completed their courses abroad (see, for example, Tanaka, 1986; Iwao and Hagiwara, 1987; Uyeki, 1993). The few actually centred upon international students' own personal lives have generally been written by students themselves (see, for example, Namavar, 1984; Okorochoa, 1997; Bhalalusesa, 1998), and they know how diverse personal issues are and how seriously they can affect educational life (or vice versa).

For example, I have met or heard about a number of international students who decided to study abroad to escape from their unhappy relationship with their parents. One Japanese woman, an MA student, 'hated' her father because of his vulgar attitudes towards his wife, and was reluctant to go home. A Japanese man, an MA student, had completely cut off communication with his family for three years because of the gap between what he wanted to do and the expectations of his parents. A Chinese man 'hated' his father because he was badly treated by him, while his sisters were very much loved. Most of these students did not complete their courses in the expected time. They may have feared completing their courses because that would mean the necessity of finding another shelter to preserve distance from their parents. If so, technically good teaching could not have been as helpful as might be expected. The students did not, however, consider their problems to be worth talking to staff about, and academic staff

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<sup>38</sup> Unlike other studies listed here, the questionnaire Mullins et al. (1995) distributed did contain a section on personal life. However, it seems that the majority of their questions were much more related to educational than personal life.

would not have been aware of them unless they were really interested in the state of their students; and unfortunately many do not want to know about students' lives outside of academic issues. As a result, although these issues greatly hindered the students from concentrating on their studies, they remained an untouched area.

Academic staff are often too busy with their own work to listen to individual students, especially about students' personal issues.<sup>39</sup> But while it may be too much to ask to expect them to play the role of counsellors, that is not to say they (and certainly researchers) should not be aware of the complexity of the relationship between students' personal issues and their academic performance. They need to be sensitive to the current state of their students' emotional health. Such knowledge and awareness might lead them to modify their teaching strategies appropriately and thereby have as strong an impact on improving students' academic performance as technically good teaching.

Being aware of students' personal issues is especially important for academic staff who teach postgraduate students, because postgraduates, regardless of whether they are home or international students, can be in a more vulnerable position than undergraduate students for various reasons:

1. Postgraduates are often older than undergraduates, and their social and family responsibilities are often greater.
2. Scholarships are highly competitive and often do not cover all the expenses of the whole period of study (Habu, 2000: 53), especially in the case of PhD students.
3. The period of study can be long in the case of PhD students.
4. Some postgraduate students may have decided to study in order to advance their career after leaving their workplace. They are therefore under great pressure to find a better job in the future, as well as taking responsibility for their risky decision.

For instance, mature students who study on a part-time basis do so for occupational, family or health reasons.<sup>40</sup> That is to say, they are likely to be under pressure from a

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<sup>39</sup> Though Leonard claims (2000: 48) from the point of view of an academic, that students do consult sympathetic staff, often women staff, about personal issues.

<sup>40</sup> According to Jiang (1994: 20), there are many distinct characteristics of mature students in higher education. However, the author states that 'the most noticeable characteristics [of international students] are their relatively older age and their richer work experiences than home full-time students'.

greater variety of personal as well as academic issues than full-time students - although working part-time students may have fewer financial worries than full-time students. For many mature women students who study on a part-time basis, study is 'additional to domestic responsibilities and/or employment' (Moses, 1990: 29; Wright, 1997: 101) and if they have children, study can hardly be their highest priority (Leonard, 2000: 11). It is possible that the more time they spend on study, the more they are accused of neglecting their children, whether or not they are really doing so (Edwards, 1993: 63; Leonard, 1994). Women are not always tough enough to free themselves from traditional women's roles or to ignore interference from other people, either. Moreover, as Leonard points out (1998c: 12), women have less access to family finance and to scholarships than men.

Although most of the studies on mature and part-time students have been on undergraduates, postgraduate students are often mature, and likely to be part-time for at least some of the duration of their degree course. They are therefore even more likely to suffer from pressure, especially those mature international postgraduate students with children. When they leave their families in their home countries, they cannot always do what they could have done for them if they had been at home (Verthelyi, 1995: 400; Maundeni, 1999: 38). When they bring their children with them, 'the magnitude and scope of adjustment problems becomes multiplied by the number of members in the family' (Oropeza et al., 1991: 281). They may have to arrange accommodation for their family, which is often more difficult to find than for single students, and also nursery or other schools, or nannies, and GPs, all in an 'unfamiliar' environment. Moreover, unlike married men students accompanied by their families, who tend to get a lot of help from their wives while they are studying, married women or single mother students tend to juggle domestic work and their studies, with little support.

Despite the complexity of international postgraduate students' situation, the influence of personal issues on students' studying abroad has not yet, to my knowledge, been systematically researched. Previous work on international students has investigated mainly young students and educational areas, where gender difference seems less salient than with mature students and personal areas; and then concluded that women students hardly differ from men (see, for example, Mullins et al. 1995; Teichler, 1997; Teichler and Maiworm, 1997). However, there is a considerable difference between 'there is no gender difference' and 'there is no gender difference identified



because the research has not investigated areas in which gender difference may exist'.

### **3.2.4 Lack of qualitative studies**

There are, however, a few studies which have paid attention to international students' personal lives (for example, Singh, 1963; Namavar, 1984; Okorochoa, 1997; Bhalalusesa, 1998; Maundeni, 1999; Habu, 2000; Kenway and Langmead, 2000). Most of them focus on gender issues and most are based on qualitative studies.

Other previous studies have relied heavily on questionnaires consisting of either multiple choice or Likert scales (see, for example, reports on ERASMUS students; Kinnell 1990; Burns, 1991; Li et al., 1997). These methods have advantages: for respondents, the schedules are easy and quick to answer because they do not require much thinking or writing. For researchers, they are relatively easy to conduct and to analyse, even with the large samples, and where the samples are well drawn, the findings can be generalised. However, they also have disadvantages. One is that researchers force respondents to choose the most appropriate answers from a limited set, even if they provide space for open-ended comments. Another is that even if there is such a space, respondents may not use it; and if there is no such space, there is no chance that respondents can express their (additional) thoughts or feelings. There is a further disadvantage: researchers may focus more on the analysis of responses to choices they gave in advance than on open-ended comments (Langmead, 1998: 11), even though the latter might be more important and appropriate for the respondents. There is therefore a high possibility of neglecting the respondents' thoughts or feelings.

Qualitative research can open up such areas and the use of in-depth interviews makes it possible to reveal just how complicated international students' lives are.

### **3.3 Summary**

The existing literature on international students has focused on their lives from an educational perspective, paying little attention to other areas. Studies are often small-scale, while the large EU studies on ERASMUS students are more concerned with which countries students come from and go to than any other factors. They certainly have not followed up possible avenues of gender difference. The 'advice' literature

produced by UKCOSA and the British Council is often limited to the provision of general information, treating international students as a homogeneous group, to make it applicable to all international students and because there is no appropriate fieldwork differentiating the concerns of particular groups. Other 'advice' literature is often written *for* and *by* academic staff, or those who deal with international students, based on their daily observations and contact with them in one or two universities. The information provided is therefore again limited because the part of international students' lives observed by staff is only a part, and the rest is not explored. There is little 'advice' literature for international students that reflects students' own voices. The policies and programmes produced for host international students are also based on scholars' or policy advisors' views of international students, without listening to the actual views of the students themselves.

The statistics on international students in the UK are hard to establish on a historical basis because of inconsistencies in the way data were formerly collected by two agencies, and then in slightly different categories in one new amalgamated agency. It is also difficult to analyse the statistics because of the limitations of the cross-tabulations published.

As a whole, what is missing in the UK regarding international students is a critical interest in the state of international students, especially their personal lives. Established researchers do not seem interested in studying student cultures, and certainly not international students' lives. In a practical sense, what is lacking is detailed, careful, qualitative fieldwork on international students. Existing research lacks detailed differentiation of these students according to, for example, academic level, ethnicity, and gender. I therefore designed a study using in-depth interviews and questionnaires to study Japanese postgraduate students, and to explore their personal as well as their educational lives, with special reference to gender. The research was small-scale, with 52 students (25 women and 27 men) at the University of London. However, it was conducted in the home language, by myself as a Japanese postgraduate student at the University, i.e. within the same institutional location as the participants. It therefore has the advantage of reporting the views of these students frankly and faithfully, with minimal misinformation or misinterpretation.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Research design**

This chapter will begin by explaining the research questions and aims I derived from the reviews in previous chapters, and then go on to discuss my research methodology, exploratory pilot work, research methods, the location of participants, data collection and processing. Finally, I shall point out the delimitation and limitations of this study.

### **4.1 Research questions and aims**

From the review of previous studies and the pilot work that will be explained later, I derived the following questions regarding Japanese postgraduate students studying abroad:

1. What kind of issues do postgraduates from a specific high-income country face while studying abroad?
2. Do these issues differ between women and men? If so, in what ways?
3. Why do these differences occur?
4. Why do these differences continue?

Two concerns led me to seek the answers to these questions. First, to encourage societal change in Japan (and similar countries) by reporting the lives of Japanese postgraduate students studying abroad and the issues they face from the standpoint of a colleague and feminist educationist. Also to indicate that these issues are not only to do with students' ability to adapt to a new or different environment, but also to Japanese society and its educational and employment systems. A second concern was to raise the awareness of British academics to need to investigate the state of international students in the interests of the well being of the students. This will also be in their own interests,

and enable them to improve policies and programmes.

## 4.2 Research methodology

As discussed in the previous chapter, studies of international students are extremely limited in the UK and most are quantitative. Firstly, I thought that there was considerable room for further investigation of international students through qualitative research. As Strauss and Corbin state:

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quantitative methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 19).

Secondly, I used qualitative methods because one of my research questions was ‘If there are differences between women and men in their issues while studying abroad, why do these differences occur?’ and I thought such research might suggest answers using grounded theory, ‘inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 23) and to verify or supplement existing theories (Sato, 1992: 75-76). However, I bore in mind that ‘researchers cannot have an “empty head”, in the way that inductivism purposes’ (Stanley, 1990: 22): ‘... all research analyses and theories are inevitably grounded in the material experiences of researchers/theorists’ (Stanley, 1990: 23), so I tried to include such recognition in a positive way within the research process (see Section 4.5 for the discussion).

This study is also informed by post-structural thinking. I believe that it is impossible to treat ‘international students’, or ‘home students’, or ‘women’ or ‘men’, as homogenous groups. Individuals in each group share some experiences, but they are not the same. Moreover, each individual has many and somewhat fluid motives. In looking for the answers to my research questions, I explored gender differences as well as commonalities among a specific national group, at postgraduate level, in a large multi-part university, recognising individual complexity, differences within each and every category, and variation even within a space of one interview. I also noted the

reconstruction of some gender identities seen among the students during the course of the study.

### **4.3 Exploratory pilot work**

Before commencing the main fieldwork, I conducted a small-scale study with an open-ended questionnaire (Appendix II-1) and a group interview (Appendix II-2), to explore the research problems (Oppenheim, 1992: 51). The three-page questionnaire was distributed by hand or mail to eight Japanese women postgraduate students at the University of London, the Institute of Education (IoE) in July 1996. Its purpose was to investigate their general thoughts on marriage, parents, ideal life-style and their current anxieties. These all appeared to be important factors preventing the women from making the best use of the experience of studying abroad embarking on careers. Questions on thoughts about careers were also asked, and there was a space for comments on the study from the respondents. There was a 100% response rate.

This was followed by a group interview with six Japanese women postgraduate students, some of whom were also respondents for the questionnaires, at my flat on 25 October 1996. The topics discussed were broader. In addition to the topics included in the questionnaires, thoughts on careers, the purpose of study abroad, the changes and issues which those women had experienced through study abroad, and the personal characteristics which they tried to maintain unaffected by foreign cultures were also discussed. The purpose of the group interview was to investigate the links among the topics, being a woman, and studying abroad. I expected to identify the important aspects for those who participated in the group interview as Japanese, as women, and/or as Japanese women.

From this small-scale study, four points became clear. Firstly, people in general associate with 'women postgraduate students studying abroad'; these women appeared to be little different from ordinary Japanese women of their age. They were not as modern or as strong as might be imagined.<sup>41</sup> Although some Japanese academics have pointed out a similar tendency among undergraduate women students and/or women

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<sup>41</sup> Namavar's studies on women postgraduate students from developing countries also conclude that they are not as modern as other people may think (Namavar, 1984).

who have received higher education (Okuyama and Fujii, 1982: 54-55; Aoki, 1990: 5-6; Inoue and Ehara, 1995: 152), I was surprised to hear so many traditional and conservative comments.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, more than half the women said they were often conscious of being Japanese and that this consciousness was stronger than when they were in Japan and/or when they were younger and abroad. Many also made statements that clearly demonstrated that they were conscious of femininity and daughterhood. The impression I had gained from my colleagues through my daily life as a Japanese woman postgraduate student was therefore close to what I had found in the group interview.

Secondly, participants frequently referred to 'dilemmas', 'problems', 'worries' or 'anxieties' during the group interview, and these related not just to careers, marriage, parents, and the ideal lifestyle, but also to having children, and their current age.

Considering these two points, I decided to centre my research on the characteristics which Japanese postgraduate students try to maintain within themselves as Japanese, and which they try not to let them be affected by foreign cultures; and the issues they faced while studying abroad.

The third point to emerge related to the participants' previous experience of being abroad. Most had lived abroad before starting postgraduate work. Some had spent several weeks, others more than one year away from home. They said they had experienced great culture shock at that time, and it was much easier for them to live abroad this time (Uyeki, 1993: 86; Suzuki, 1997: 76-77). I had not expected so many of them to have had this experience; and until I carried out the exploratory pilot work I had considered looking at 'adjustment to living abroad in the first year' as an important element of my research.

The fourth point affected how I should proceed with my study. Most of the participants stated that if they were selected as participants, they would be happy to be interviewed once, but not twice, because of the limited time they had. They thought the same would probably apply to other students: most would be too stressed to participate in a second interview because of the amount of course-work they were required to do in a limited time.

Other points from the pilot study that needed developing in the main study were:

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<sup>42</sup> This tendency is also pointed out by academics in other countries. See McVeigh (1997: 11) and Kerr (1985: 84-85).

- the need to conduct research not only with women but also men so as to identify commonalities as well as differences by genders. Focusing on women only can mean ignoring 'the important premise that gender has any cultural meaning only because it is based on difference (Hollway, 1982 cited in Thomas, 1990: 2).
- the possible effects of differences in the field of study on respondents' ways of thinking (Becher 1989; Moses, 1989; Becher et al. 1994; Delamont et al. 2000). I therefore decided to choose participants from a variety of disciplines as well as from various institutions and colleges.
- I also decided to leave much more space for respondents, by asking questions like 'Tell me about the pressure which you feel, if you do', or 'Tell me about any complicated feelings which you have', rather than limiting my questioning to 'Tell me about your thoughts on marriage' or '... on parents'. This would make it possible for the respondents to think more freely about whether or not they felt pressure or experienced complex feelings, and if so, about the causes of this pressure or complex feelings, than if I channelled their talk into given topics. I expected that they would talk about a greater variety of topics than I could think of, and provide me with honest answers without being influenced by the question. Also, since the respondents were to be men as well as women, and studying in several different fields, I could not foresee what kinds of answers I would receive.
- Finally I decided to add questions about reasons, purposes and motives for the decision to study abroad and about participants' plans for the time after completing their courses. I expected here to see the links among the kinds of issues they faced while studying abroad, their clarity of purpose in deciding to study abroad, and the clarity of their future plans. I became interested in these links because I noticed in the pilot that the more issues each one raised, the more unclear her purposes in studying abroad and future plans appeared to be.

#### **4.4 Research methods**

I collected information by conducting small-scale research, using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and questionnaires, and aiming for a sample of about 50 participants. In addition, I utilised participant observation, being myself a

Japanese postgraduate student at the University of London. Because I could conduct only one face-to-face interview per student, the comparison of the information gained using these three methods was important to support the validity of this research. However, as is common, each of these methods had a different weighting: the interview was the main research method, with the questionnaire as a supplement for the interview, while participant observation provided questions, understanding, and a context for the answers from the very beginning.

The interviews were conducted in Japanese because I wanted to understand the nuances of responses thoroughly in the native language. A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was regarded as most appropriate for the three reasons:

- Firstly, the areas I wanted to focus on were relatively clear from the pilot study: characteristics that participants were trying not to lose as Japanese women and men through living abroad, and the issues which students had been facing while studying abroad. I wanted to explore those topics as fully as possible. It was possible, for example, to imagine that if there were ten students who referred to 'age' as one of their concerns, the contents of their concerns about age would differ from one to another: one might talk about age in relation to marriage, another in relation to finding a job.
- Secondly, I was expecting to make new findings by leaving a space for further exploration. Open-ended questions are most useful in gathering 'authentic' understanding of people's experiences (Silverman, 1993: 10). There was also a risk in a more formal approach, as Habu (2000: 46), who did a small study on Japanese women students in British higher education also using informal interviews, points out: '[a] more formal approach would run the risk of relying too heavily on a priori hypothesis and not allow for inductive insights to be gained'.
- Thirdly, since the research was based on a study of women and men, it was necessary to plan semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that could make comparison possible to some extent.

The questions in the interview were in four parts: questions about student's lives prior to coming to the UK, their thoughts on the UK while living in the country, thoughts on student life, and their plans for after completing their courses.

The questionnaire was in English, because it was straightforward and simple, and therefore easy enough for the participants to answer in English, and I could save time on translation. Its purpose was to obtain personal information as well as supplementary



data to improve the understanding of the information obtained through interviews. The questionnaire responses were to be particularly useful in grasping how much the participants had exposed themselves to British culture or if they had shut themselves inside their own culture, remaining within a Japanese community. Its questions therefore covered not only study but also life outside education, the extent of communication with non-Japanese and Japanese people, living expenses and conditions, academic as well as career backgrounds, prior experience of living abroad, family background, and career prospects. These matters were investigated through a combination of open-ended, Likert-style, and multivariable questions, depending on the context.

On the basis of the first questionnaire and the group interview, and the points, which emerged, I drew up a final set of questions for the interview and questionnaire. I then piloted both with one man and three women students to make sure that both the interview and the questionnaire had wording that everyone could understand in much the same way, and that the interview schedule was appropriate. This also helped to train me as an interviewer who would be careful not to lead answers to questions (Bell, 1993: 99).

#### **4.5 Locating the Participants**

A strategy of purposeful sampling was used (Patton, 1980: 101; Maxwell, 1996: 70-71; Denscombe, 1998: 15). Maxwell defines this as:

[A] strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that can't be gotten as well from other choices.  
(Maxwell, 1996: 70)

Students at the University of London appeared to be the most suitable participants for this study for two reasons:

- Firstly, most postgraduate students who participated in the pilot group interview, particularly MA students who were on one year courses, said that there would be many students reluctant to spare time for two time-consuming face-to-face interviews (see Section 4.3 for more discussion). I therefore needed to get as much information as

possible from one meeting per student, and at the same time I had to have enough knowledge to understand each student well. I thought that concentrating on Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London would be an advantage. Over five years at the IoE, I have observed my fellow students closely, and critically, as is often required in social research using participant observation (Patton, 1990: 124-125; Silverman, 1993: 106). I thus had enough knowledge about the student culture to comprehend and analyse the data I would collect through just one interview and questionnaire. My research is therefore very different from a 'one shot' or 'hit and run survey', which can be criticised for the lack of effort to understand the situation of the participants (Sato, 1992: 50).

- Secondly, I was aware of the power relationship between myself, as a researcher, and the researched. This has been widely pointed out, and it is seen as one of the causes for the distortion of the interviewees' responses (Denzin, 1970: 133-138; Bell, 1993: 98; Silverman, 1993: 97). I judged that the distortion caused by the power relationship could be 'minimised' by choosing students at the University of London, my colleagues, as my research participants, although I was aware that there might be criticisms of this.

Maxwell (1996: 91), for example, states that it is *not* a meaningful goal for a researcher doing qualitative research to try to minimise the researcher's effect. What is important, he says, is to understand how the researcher her/himself is influencing what the informant says, and how this affects the validity of the inferences she/he can derive from the interview. His criticism appears to be plausible and convincing, but I rather think that whether a researcher should minimise her/his effect depends on the relationship between the questions to be asked, and the possible research participants. Depending on this, there may still be cases in which the researcher had better minimise her/his effect on her/his research in order to obtain higher quality information.

In this research it was particularly important for me to take into account that many Japanese people are sensitive to the 'name' of the university, due to their education system overemphasising the ranking of universities (see Section 2.2.1 and footnote 27 for more discussion).<sup>43</sup> I had some sensitive questions about educational background in

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<sup>43</sup> I had met some students at the IoE where I had studied before being involved in this research who were extremely sensitive about the ranking of the universities they had graduated from in Japan, and about the difference between this ranking and that of other students. Some were happy about the ranking of the universities which they graduated from, but others were not, and tried to satisfy themselves by finding other students who had graduated from lower ranking universities than their own, and then looking down

Japan, and whether or not the institution where a research participant was currently studying was her/his first choice. Also whether or not the participant had considered studying at any other institutions. As I planned to distribute the questionnaire before the interview (see Section 4.6.1 for the reason), raising these issues could influence not only the information obtained on the questionnaire, but also affect what was said during the interview (Denscombe, 1998: 116). Above all, I wanted the participants to be as honest as possible in answering the questions in both the questionnaire and the interview, and to be as free as possible from a sense of my having greater power. In this respect, I thought that I could reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched by taking not students from other universities but my fellow students.

Even so, I was not optimistic that I could eliminate the power relationship completely. The University of London is a federation of 43 colleges and institutions spread around London (University of London External Relations Unit, 2000). Some are big and others relatively small. Some are proud of their world-wide reputation while others are less well known and overshadowed by more well-known colleges. It was also impossible to step out of being a woman research student in women's studies at the IoE (Denscombe, 1998: 116). I was not sure how research participants studying at other colleges and institutions would see me and measure the relationship between us. This is indeed still a mystery today. Yet, I was quite sure that the power relationship between students of the IoE and other colleges and institutions which belonged to the University of London would be smaller than between the University of London and other universities.

- Firstly, because the IoE is an institution specialising in education, and there would be little point in research participants comparing the ranking of their very different institutions or colleges with it. Moreover, I thought its name was not widely known among Japanese people in general, including Japanese students at the University, because of its speciality.

- Secondly, and related to the first reason, if I had conducted research with students from other universities, they would have seen me not as a student at the IoE, but as a student at the University of London. In which case, there would be a higher possibility of a power relationship existing and having an influence, because the name of this

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on these 'inferior' students.

University is widely known, even though it is doubtful if its complex structure is understood among Japanese people.

- Thirdly, although I am aware that some academics warn about the desirability of convenience sampling (Patton, 1990: 180, 183; Maxwell, 1996: 70-71; Denscombe, 1998: 17), I was on a tight budget and it was not ideal for me to go to a provincial university to research one or two students at most per day and return to London by train. Students at the University of London were easy to access because all the colleges and academic institutions were nearby, and the University has the largest number of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK: approximately 25 % of the total number in 1996-97 (HESA, 1998). In addition, the structure of the University, a federation of colleges, each with much independence, was also attractive in making it possible to have a spread of participants from a variety of subject areas and institutions and allowing anonymity.

#### **4.5.1 Sampling procedures and the rationale for the selection of 52 participants**

I asked an officer at the registry at the IoE about the best procedures to obtain research participants with the co-operation of the registry office of other institutions and colleges of the University of London. She said that the procedures would be extremely complicated because the institutions and colleges would protect students' privacy and be reluctant to show me the student records, although some of the institutions and colleges might help me as messengers or mediators. I judged that this would be time-consuming and might bias the sampling. I therefore decided to look for my research participants myself, and obtained them by the following five methods:

1. Approaching some Japanese students at the IoE
2. Attending a joint party for students studying at colleges and institutions which belonged to the University of London
3. Contacting the person in charge of the Rotary Foundation scholars, whom I had known as a scholar when I was an MA student in 1994-95, and asking him to provide me with a list of Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London

4. Surveying the list of names of the *Europe Shigakenjinkai* (the society of people from Shiga-prefecture of Japan in European countries) which I had kept, being a member myself, and checking whether it included postgraduate students at the University of London
5. Snowball sampling from participants obtained through methods from 1 to 4

In the five ways I obtained 52 research participants (25 women and 27 men),<sup>44</sup> although I had originally planned to find 50 students (25 women and 25 men). This appeared to be the maximum which I could physically recruit, research on, and whose data I could handle but a sufficient number to make a comparison of women and men, considering the dispersion of fields of study. Given there were a total of 544 Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London at the time (HESA, 1998), 50 represented nearly 10%, which seemed satisfactory.<sup>45</sup>

#### **4.6 Data collection**

The fieldwork took place during between February 1997 and February 1998, although there was a six-month interval between August 1997 and January 1998. I deliberately chose this time of the year because I thought that it was when students who had registered in the autumn of the previous year would have become accustomed to their courses and have time to spare for my research. It should be noted this was just before the Asian economic crisis of 1998.<sup>46</sup>

I first asked some women students, most on different courses to mine at the IoE but whom I had known through the orientation-course or from exchanging a few words when we met on campus.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, I attended a party for Japanese students at the University of London, held at a ballroom in Hanover Street on 10 December 1996 and,

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<sup>44</sup> The reason will be explained in Section 4.6.1.

<sup>45</sup> The total number of Japanese postgraduate students registered British universities in 1996-97 was 2,195. 50 therefore corresponded to 2.3 % of the total number of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK.

<sup>46</sup> The sudden drop of the Thai baht in July 1997 caused the drop of other Asian countries' currencies against the US dollar.

<sup>47</sup> Due to the imbalance in the number of women and men at the IoE - the number of women is overwhelmingly high compared with that of men - I had seen only a few Japanese men and I did not know any of them at that time.

a month later, contacted a man student at LSE whom I had met there. I briefly explained my research to him and he offered to contribute.

In addition, I sent a letter to the person in charge of the Rotary Foundation scholars in the spring of the same year (Appendix II-3). I received a reply and obtained the list within a week; three students appeared to be suitable for my research. I wrote to them all and asked for their participation (Appendix II-4). I telephoned them a couple of days later and found that two had left their student halls, but the third, a man, I did contact agreed to offer his help. I also contacted a woman student who was studying at Birkbeck College who I had met once at a gathering of *Europe Shigakenjinkai* and whose address was on the society's list.

I thus started collecting the research participants from scratch, using all the methods I could think of, but I later snowballed from those participants. Most of the students introduced me to one or two students on their own course or at their college. In addition, a man student at LSE was extremely helpful in preparing a letter and distributing it to his acquaintances, not only at LSE but also LBS and Imperial College, taking a variety of courses. In total he introduced me to one woman and seven men.<sup>48</sup>

#### **4.6.1 The progress of the fieldwork**

Before meeting participants, I usually made an appointment to arrange the date, time and place by phone in advance. I informed them how long the questionnaire and interview would be likely to last, so that they could choose a suitable date when they would have enough time. Most participants were polite and kind in showing consideration for my schedule, although I could sense how busy they were. Some fitted the appointments with me between classes, and others had difficulty in finding any time in the early days because of classes, term-time examinations, writing assignments, and/or part-time jobs. I also explained the purpose of my research as well as giving participants an outline of it (Bell, 1993: 97), but with little explanation of the detail of the questionnaire and interview in order to prevent participants from preparing 'plausible' answers in advance (Habu, 2000: 47).

The places where I conducted my research varied: canteens, café, the IoE, students' flats, houses or student halls, or my flat, and twice I carried out my research at

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<sup>48</sup> All these students were studying economics, according to the University of London's classification, but

a (quiet) pub. I let those participants choose, and followed their directions to meet them. About two-thirds of them suggested the place where we should meet. They almost always chose canteens or cafés nearby or in their colleges or institutions, or participants' laboratories or their offices, and our appointment times were often in the daytime on weekdays. Those who suggested other places, such as their flats, houses, student halls or pubs, asked me to meet them in the evening or at the weekends. One-third of the participants willingly let me choose the venue and time: they were often doctoral students who were relatively flexible with their time. In that case, I often chose a café at the Royal National Hotel just across the road from the IoE, which was convenient to get to and easy to find. This café was quiet and we did not have to feel pressed because of its size, with plenty of tables and chairs. In most cases, including those at the hotel, there were no problems in carrying out the interviews and completing the questionnaire, but there were a few cases in which we had to change places in the middle of my research because of some unexpected interference. In these cases, we tried to complete the first half of my research, the questionnaire, and do the second half, the interview, at a quieter place.

The research procedure began with the research participant and researcher spending some time on the formalities of introduction and small talk over a cup of tea. This is a commonly recognised ritual among Japanese people (Woodroffe, 2000: 46): to make both sides comfortable and to get the following business - questionnaires and interviews in this case - completed smoothly. When the right time came, I explained the purpose of my research, the approximate length of time needed to answer the questionnaire and conduct the interview, and how to answer the questionnaire, showing the written explanation and instructions (Appendix II-6). I made sure that the same explanation was given to every participant, thus avoiding giving any extra information to any one of the participants, which could have distorted the information collected. I then asked my research participants to start by answering the questionnaires, which usually took 25 to 30 minutes, so that they could finish the rather 'boring' part first. While the participants were answering the questionnaire, I either left them alone or sat at some distance to give them the privacy needed. I told them to skip questions, which they did not understand, and I would go through these questions after they had finished

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their courses varied and included business administration, industrial relations, as well as economics itself.

the others. However, this seldom happened. I did not want to pressure them into answering because of my presence (Denscombe, 1998: 19); rather, I wanted them to be relaxed. After finishing the questionnaire, I conducted and taped the interviews, which normally lasted for 40 to 50 minutes. Finally, I asked for their contact addresses in London as well as whether they were willing to participate in follow-up research on the telephone or in writing, and gave each a slip for their answer (Appendix II-9).

After I had conducted interviews with 47 participants, I took a break because it was already the middle of July 1997, the busiest time for MA students who were preparing for examinations as well as finishing their dissertations. I was therefore reluctant to recruit more people at such a time. Having decided to wait for the new intake of students for 1997-98 to settle in, I spent several months transcribing tapes and analysing the data collected from these 47 students. Also I was cautious about the dispersion of fields of study that the students were taking and I was in need of men in other fields other than Economics and Arts, but was unable to find any suitable students.

I then resumed my fieldwork with men students in education, in the middle of February 1998, and finally reached the stage where I could terminate my research having interviewed 50 students. As soon as I was able to unwind after having struggled to get the last three participants to complete my quota, there was a fortunate event. At a party held at a friend's flat, I met a Japanese man who was reading pharmaceuticals: he would help balance the dispersion of fields of study of my research participants. He was not only willing to participate in my research but also to introduce me to another Japanese man who also read pharmaceuticals at the same institution. I therefore included both these men in my research programme, having judged their suitability from the fields of study they were reading: there was no participant in their subject previously. The total number of research participants therefore reached 52 at the end of my research.

#### **4.6.2 The rapport between the researcher and the participants**

The interviews were often enjoyable and relaxed. Those who had appeared to be blunt and reserved when I made an appointment with them on the telephone, usually men, often surprised me by being ready to reveal their thoughts, feelings, and private concerns during the interview. I had a particularly strong impression of the frankness and deep thinking of a few participants, and, interestingly, they were often those who seemed to be unfriendly at first. Although it has been said that interviewees are often



reluctant to talk about their private lives (Oppenheim, 1992: 65-66), this is not always the case. In some cases, people open out with little hesitation to discuss private matters, because their listeners are complete strangers: they may never meet each other in the future, and there is little need to worry that what they say may be publicised. In this respect, I, as an interviewer, whom these participants met in a foreign country during their limited stay abroad, might be the perfect listener, especially for the more reserved and lonely students. There were also a few students, both women and men, who were experiencing problems such as loneliness and difficulties with their spouses. Some asked me to keep in touch after the research had been concluded. Perhaps this was because I was also a postgraduate student: I too lived in London, and they knew I could relate to them emotionally. If I had been in a higher status position, for example, a lecturer at a university, they might not have confided in me and would probably have given me more plausible, better-sounding and innocuous answers than they actually did.

In responding to the questionnaires, no one answered 'Do not wish to answer (DW)', although I had given them this option. One reason was probably that they thought it would be impolite to do so: in Japanese society, such a straightforward attitude is often unwelcome. However, at the same time, I think that another reason was that emphasising strict confidentiality before asking them to answer the questionnaire effectively helped to relax the participants.

Furthermore, no one refused to be recorded during the interview or to give her/his contact address in London, which I asked for in case I needed to conduct follow-up research on the telephone or in writing.

#### 4.6.3 Notes on the interview

In one question I asked, '*Ryugaku wo ketsui sareta riyuu, mokuteki, mataha douki wo oshietekudasasai* (Could you tell me the reason, purpose/objective and motive that made you decide to study abroad?)'.<sup>49</sup> I intentionally used the words, *riyuu* (reason), *mokuteki* (purpose/objective) and *douki* (motive) in a single question, because the meanings of these words are similar in this context, although their definitions are different in the strict sense. I hoped the participants would talk about their many

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<sup>49</sup> The Japanese word, *mokuteki* means both 'purpose' and 'objective' in English, as discussed later. In the following, I will use 'reason' to include 'purposes', 'objectives', and 'motives', except on the occasions I need to use one of those words specifically.

reasons for deciding to study abroad as openly as possible, without being nervous about the precise definitions of those words. I aimed to make it possible for participants to talk about all the reasons behind their decision to study abroad, and to minimise the risk that they would feel constrained.

I was also aware of the interaction between the reasons, and that often they could not be separated. This relates to Rudd's finding in his research on former postgraduate students who had dropped out midway through their courses. He points out:

[H]ardly any of the students mentioned only one reason for the decision to enter postgraduate study; many produced a substantial number. Moreover, each consideration will have interacted with others, sometimes in a simple way, but often in a rather complex manner. (Rudd: 1985, 22)

I intentionally avoided narrowing down the question, by for example only asking about the reason why they chose particular countries, institutions, or subjects - as is sometimes seen in other literature (Goldsmith and Shawcross, 1985; Regur 1990; Mullins et al., 1995). My intention in asking the participants about the reasons why they decided to study abroad was to help me to understand issues facing them while studying abroad through examining those issues in relation to the reasons for their decisions. Also, since all of the respondents in this study had already embarked on their courses when I interviewed them, they were in a position to describe their reasons retrospectively, but from the perspective of having chosen a particular path. I therefore had to prepare myself to receive a variety of responses: from those that described their reasons for coming to the UK in the first place. I knew that some participants would have come to the UK not to take postgraduate courses, initially, but for other reasons. There would be also more practical reasons why they chose a particular subject. Narrowing down the question as previous studies have done would have made it impossible to explore other reasons students may have had in the process of deciding to study abroad.

It emerged that my respondents could be categorised into two groups as regards their initial reasons for coming to the UK. Those who came specifically to take up postgraduate studies from the beginning, and others who came to the UK for different reasons, and then became interested in postgraduate studies (see Chapter 7). The former

students took it for granted that I was asking about their reasons for deciding to take up postgraduate studies abroad. In contrast, some of the second group started talking about their initial reasons for coming to the UK and then those for deciding to take up postgraduate studies, or vice versa. I did not specify the order in which they should talk about things because I wanted to hear as many reasons as possible, and because I knew from the pilot that participants would themselves tend to clarify the order of priorities (see Chapter 7 for further discussion) among their reasons.

It is, however, important to clarify the definitions of the words used: *riyuu* (reason), *mokuteki* (purpose) and *douki* (motive), so that readers understand how much the meanings of these words appear to overlap each other. The definitions are as follows (Longman, 1991):

<i>Riyuu</i>	Reason	The cause of an event or situation; a fact, event, or statement that provides an explanation or excuse for something
<i>mokuteki</i>	Purpose	An intention or plan; a person's reason for an action
	Objective	An aim, esp. one that must be worked towards over a long period, GOAL
<i>Douki</i>	Motive	A reason for action

## 4.7 Data processing

I transcribed most of the tapes myself using Microsoft Word 6.0, but some were transcribed by five people hired through advertising on the notice boards at colleges and institutions of the University of London. Most of those who contacted me were Japanese women, and those hired were taking BA or MA courses at other institutions, including the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. Only one woman was working on a full-time basis, but she had obtained an MA degree (in gender studies) at a British university the previous year. As I had given instructions both orally and in written form on how to transcribe tapes when I gave or mailed tapes to transcribers, there were few serious problems with the transcriptions I received.

However, two people did not meet deadlines - both of them said that it took much longer than they had expected - and one returned a transcription in handwriting. Whenever I received transcripts, I checked every word to make sure that the transcriptions matched what participants was said on the tapes, and I noted inflections, for example, emphases, laughs, and pauses.

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

According to Miles and Huberman's (1994: 9) list of procedures for qualitative data analysis, the process includes 'affixing codes', 'noting reflections', 'sorting and sifting through these materials', 'isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences', 'elaborating a small set of generalizations', and 'confronting these generalizations'. I spent many hours reading the transcripts critically, making notes on my ideas about their statements and about the participants who had made the comments.

During this process, I had to consider one distinction very carefully, which led to an important decision. It was clear through conducting the interviews that while women who were studying education or language tended to control themselves so as to maintain a sense of 'femininity' or 'Japaneseness', the other women and men appeared not to have even thought of doing this. It became increasingly evident that those who were trying to maintain this sense (the women studying education or languages) were a minority group. This had two implications. First, it had to be admitted that the pilot group interview with women students, most of whom were education students, had been problematic/ atypical. The second was that I therefore needed to review the two areas I had originally been interested in: the characteristics students tried to maintain within themselves as Japanese, without being affected by foreign cultures; and the issues they faced while studying abroad. I decided to concentrate on the latter because this was a large enough area to explore on its own.

Coding was a hard as well as crucial part of analysing the transcripts. My first step was to highlight words, phrases, and sentences that related to my central interests in each transcript in order to make them stand out. In so doing, I paid little attention to whether or not the responses given were applicable to the questions. This was because it was not unusual for the respondents while answering another question to remember,

and make comments on something they had forgotten to say when answering earlier questions, or to repeat or expand on their earlier statements at a later stage. In addition, there was a clear tendency for many participants to return to the same areas, such as marriage, age, and careers, in response to different questions. I believed this tendency showed how important these areas were when they thought about their lives. It was therefore more important for me to pay attention to these areas than merely to adhere to the original order and content of the questions.

The words, phrases, and sentences chosen through the highlighting process were presented in two ways: topically and chronologically. This classification, in not one but two ways, matched what Schaie and Willis (1996), American psychologists, found in their research on adult development and ageing. On topical organisation, they state that one of its advantages is that 'it presents the full picture of each process throughout the life span'; but its disadvantage is 'that it tends to fragment the individual'. Concerning chronological organisation, they say that its advantage is that '... a book so organized reads like a biography or a collection of biographies'. However, at the same time, they find two disadvantages with such organisation, one of which applied in my research: 'the chronological organization "chops up" the process, making it difficult to get a full picture' (Schaie and Willis, 1996: 2). I was coding transcripts, unlike Schaie and Willis who were writing a book on adult development, so there were therefore considerable differences between their purposes and mine, but the points which we had to consider were still the same. We were all dealing with events that occurred in a certain period in people's lives.

Given the advantages and disadvantages of both topical and chronological organisations, I classified coded words, phrases and sentences in each transcript that were judged to relate to my concerns, using both organisation.

- When coded topically, there were 18 groups in all: 'parents', 'spouses', 'family' (other than parents and spouses), 'other people' around each respondent, 'expectations of others', 'effort not to be affected by foreign culture', 'language', 'course-work', 'freedom in the UK', 'study environment', 'financial capacity', 'personality', 'age', 'emotional instability', 'children', 'marriage', 're-socialisation', and 'sociability'.
- In the chronological organisation, there were three groups in total: 'coming to Britain', 'while studying abroad', and 'after completing the course'. However, as my central interests are the issues facing Japanese postgraduate students during their study abroad,

I shall particularly concentrate on 'while studying abroad', and the other chronological groups will be used to deepen the analysis of issues concerning this, and are in later chapters.

After the analysis of issues during their study abroad, all the statements related to the reasons for making a decision to study abroad were coded, classified, and examined. Following this procedure, all the comments related to the time after completing one's course were coded, and classified into two smaller groups: (1) occupations and field of work aspired to by students, and (2) thoughts on their future after they completed their courses. Each of these groups was also examined.

Groups classified by topical organisation were used as reference points to double check that I had not made any omissions and were also to obtain a full picture of each issue.

#### **4.9 Dilemmas in comparative studies in qualitative research**

The issue of generalisability in qualitative research has been the subject of much debate among academics (Sato, 1992: 109-114; Day, 1993: 261-263; Silverman, 1993: 74-75). However, there is a commonality in their arguments: it is wrong to ask for 'statistical generalisability' in qualitative research, and what we should instead look for is 'analytic generalisability' (Yin, 1994: 30-31, 36).

Taking account of this kind of criticism, I nonetheless went ahead and used numerical data that I had obtained through the interviews. In particular I noted the number of times particular issues were mentioned as well as the number of informants who mentioned each issue. However, I did not use the numbers of 'mentions' to achieve statistical generalisation. I used them, first, to construct a hierarchical order to indicate the areas to which I should pay more systematic attention (Rudd, 1985), and to set a yardstick for comparing women and men. I also used them to show all the comments made by students with the total number of times an issue was mentioned so as to present the overall tendency of both genders and also within each gender.

It may be argued one should not count the number of mentions to open-ended questions, nor make comparisons based on that number, since these could easily be manipulated by the researcher, who is in a position to control how much exploring is

carried out during the interview. In other words, the number of mentions to open-ended questions can depend on how deeply the researcher explored the issue.

However, as discussed, quantitative methods were used to some degree as a step towards ensuring better analysis, and as being much more suitable for the aims of my research aim. When I needed to look at how each mention related to other elements in an individual account, the analysis of the content of statements was particularly crucial.

The coding process was thus not always straightforward, and there were decisions of classification to be made. There are some issues that could be categorised in many ways and into a number of different areas:

- For example, in Table 7-5 on the 'The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned reasons for studying abroad related to advice or influence from others', there is an issue under 'Reasons related to advice or influence from others' which is 'Applied for my company's system for studying abroad and was chosen'. This could have been categorised under 'Reasons related to career', if the action of *applying* was what was important. However, all the students emphasised that they *had been chosen* by their employers as applicants. I therefore categorised this item as indicated.
- Another example is in Table 5-5 for 'The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to their language'. There were some students who talked about the language problem in relation to course-work. Their issues could therefore be categorised under either 'Issues related to the course' or 'Issues related to language'. In such cases I followed the context of their statements and worked out whether the students placed the greater weight on the course or language. Accordingly, I classified their responses under 'Issues to do with language'.

The same rule was applied to all other cases in the tables throughout this thesis.

In the chapters for findings, i.e. Chapters 5 to 8, when it is necessary to quote from the interviews, I have quoted not only the comment that was directly related to the point under discussion, but also other statements before, and after, the comment, and have italicised the focal point. By doing this, I hope that readers will understand the context in which the comment occurred.

## **4.10 Delimitation and Limitations in this study**

As Hammersley (1992a: 185) openly admits with the case selection strategy, no one can have everything. Limitations were also going to be inevitable in this research. According to Rudestam and Newton (1992: 73-74), 'limitations refer to restrictions in the study over which you have no control', while 'delimitations, on the other hand, imply limitations on the research design that you have deliberately imposed'. I will discuss both the delimitations and limitations of this study, although the explanation of the delimitations tends to overlap with Section 4.5.

### **4.10.1 Delimitations**

I imposed two delimitations on this study. One was that as I discussed earlier, the research participants were limited to Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London. The other was that despite being aware of the possibility that I might have to go back to the participants for follow-up research, I decided not to ask them to tell me their permanent addresses in Japan, even in the questionnaire. Although I was conscious that many research participants would return to Japan when they had completed their courses within a few to several months after conducting my research, I was also aware that some Japanese people dislike being asked their addresses by someone they do not know well. Indeed, some students had two kinds of name cards: one with the name of the person, and the name and address only of their institution or college, and the other with their private address and telephone number in the UK and sometimes that in Japan. This indicated to me that they were exercising caution in this area, which I respected so as to maintain the rapport and avoid giving the impression of 'pushiness'.

### **4.10.2 Limitations**

There are four limitations to this study:

- The first concerns the influence of the procedures for obtaining participants (see Section 4.5.1).

The difficulty in obtaining the list of Japanese postgraduate students caused two problems. One was the difficulty in balancing the numbers of research participants in



accordance with the proportion of the total numbers of students in each field of study, although I tried to achieve a balance where possible. The other difficulty related to the fact that I had to rely on snowball sampling to some extent and it is hard to know how accurately those who are collected through snowballing represent 'the population of concern' (Oppenheim, 1992: 43). In relation to this limitation, as discussed earlier, a man student at LSE was extremely helpful in recruiting research participants, but most of these were sponsored by their employers; he had met them at a society for students who were in that position. Unfortunately, official data are not available on the number of those Japanese students receiving financial support from their employers, so the bias, if any, this introduced, cannot be gauged.

- The second limitation derives from the size of this study, and the particularity of its location.

A few participants seemed, for example, to have decided to study at the University of London because of its being the capital city of the UK or else because it was the obvious choice. In this respect, they might be different from those who chose less well-known universities both in and outside of London because of the strength of their subject there, or because they wanted to work with a particular lecturer. Some findings of this study may therefore not be applicable to those studying at other universities. Moreover, when living expenses in London are considered, students in London, including the participants in this study, might be the more fortunate ones who could support themselves. Other students who had intended to study in London may have had to give up because of its high cost of living.<sup>50</sup>

There might be therefore a criticism that students in London must be more affluent than those studying at other universities, and face fewer financial problems. However, one study suggests that '[c]ross-institutional comparisons of responses reveal very few differences between universities in the levels to which students experience different problems' (Mullins et al., 1995: 210).<sup>51</sup> It should also be remembered that there is always the possible mobility between other universities and the University of London,

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<sup>50</sup> According to Mullins et al.'s study on both home and international students at three Australian universities, nearly 30% of international students researched considered the cost of living when they decided where to study (Mullins et al., 1995: 207).

<sup>51</sup> The study's subjects were local and international students of the University of Adelaide, the Flinders University of South Australia, and the University of South Australia.

for example, when students take a higher level of postgraduate studies, progressing from diploma to MA, or MA to PhD courses. It is therefore misleading to assert that students at the University of London are better off than those students at other universities, based on where they are currently studying. In addition, it is not right to assert that students studying at the University of London have few problems with money. At least two students, both men, who joined my study later on, had to discontinue their courses because of financial problems (see Section 6.2 for more discussion). After completing my fieldwork, I also heard of a woman student who was not a participant in this study, but who faced serious financial problems and had to return to Japan in the middle of her PhD course. Two of these three (one man and the woman) relied on their savings and scholarships, and the other depended on his savings and part-time work. However, none of them had enough money to finance themselves until the completion of their courses.

- The third limitation relates to my being known as a feminist.

There were occasions where I felt that some participants were conscious of this fact. For example, one man appeared to be choosing his words very carefully when he was referring to gender discrimination. Also one woman made an introductory remark, 'What I'm going to talk about is directly related to women's studies, and ...'. Considering these occasions, I suspect that there may have been more participants who were sensitive to my background than I actually noticed, and some of them may have made statements that were what they thought I wanted to hear, but not necessarily what they themselves believed.

- A final point concerns the tendency that the more mentions of issues participants made, the more frequently they appear in the discussion of issues in this thesis.

The central aim of this study was to investigate the issues faced by Japanese postgraduate students while studying abroad, with particular reference to 'gender'. For this purpose, I intended to analyse these issues with reference to the numbers of mentions related to them; the numbers of mentions being used as a yardstick to construct a hierarchical order for systematic analysis and to compare tendencies among women and men. It is therefore inevitable that my analysis centralised the mentions made by many participants in comparison with those by a few participants, even though

the latter appeared to be extremely interesting or at least worth of note.

For example, *a few men* mentioned an interest in getting married soon, or that they had little interest in pursuing a career, and were interesting as unusual cases. Also *a few women* clearly showed an interest in being independent but they receive little attention in this study (although they were encouraging and it was tempting for me as a feminist as well as their colleague to refer to them). Moreover, a few students who had not at first had clear purposes for their decisions to study abroad developed them later through studying in this country, and vice versa.

However, the use of the numbers of mentions made by women and men prevented me from analysing these minorities as extensively as the majority groups, although I try to refer to them to some extent. I would not want to suggest that there were no independent, strong-willed women amongst my research participants: there were such women, although they were in the minority.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Issues in educational life while studying abroad**

This chapter examines the information collected through interviews as well as questionnaires with 52 Japanese postgraduate students (25 women and 27 men) studying at the University of London. The main focus is the issues they encountered in their educational life and the commonalities across both genders, differences by gender, and differences within each gender in these issues. In addition, commonalities and differences related to other factors, for example, level and field of study, are examined.

The presentation of the information is based on a division between 'educational life' and 'personal life': 'educational life' meaning life concerned with study, as against 'personal life' meaning life outside study, though the two are obviously interrelated. International students' lives cannot be neatly divided. However, I decided to use this division for two reasons. One is that previous studies have tended to pay much more attention to students' educational life than to their personal life and the latter might be expected to display more gender difference than the former. By dividing students' experiences into 'educational' and 'personal' spheres, and by paying specific attention to personal life, I was able to foreground gendered issues and concerns. The other reason was practical: respondents mentioned nine diverse sets of issues in relation to their period of studying abroad, and it was easier to report these across two separate chapters. Where necessary, I will refer to the blurred areas, which exist due to the interaction between the two areas.

#### **5.1 Overview of issues while studying abroad**

Before going deeply into the analysis of the educational life, the frequency of issues with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned the whole range of issues needs to be indicated.

**Table 5-1 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students encountered issues while studying abroad**

Area*	Women		Men		Total	
	No. of mentions**	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents
(1) Finance	20	14	22	14	42	28
(2) Course	19	12	9	8	28	20
(3) Marriage	17	10	9	7	26	17
(4) Language	13	11	12	10	25	21
(5) Emotional insecurity	9	5	5	3	14	8
(6) Intervention by other people	10	9	5	5	15	14
(7) Living environment	10	6	3	3	13	9
(8) Relationships with parents	9	7	0	0	9	7
(9) Others	9	6	3	3	12	9
Sub total	116	24	68	25	184	49
No issues mentioned	-	1	-	2	-	3
N	-	25	-	27	-	52

\* Each area covers several issues.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several issues.

Three points should be made immediately to clarify some features in Table 5-1:

- Firstly, the table shows that the total number of mentions made by women and men is 184, but the number for women was nearly twice as large as the number for men: the average number of mentions per woman is 4.6, per man is 2.5. This suggests either that more women tend to face more issues than men while studying abroad, or that women are more open to verbalising what concerns than are men, or both. My being a woman as an interviewer may have had an effect, too.

- Secondly, one woman and two men did not make any comments, which could be related to issues. I had the impression that these three students were calm and composed, regarding their study abroad as a necessary step to advancing their career. They also appeared to think there was no point in worrying about something they could do little about. They were all single, aged about 30, and paying the cost of studying abroad through their work or former working experience. The woman was an MBA student and paying the cost from her savings from her previous jobs, mainly at a foreign stock brokerage firm in Japan. She was one of the few women who were supporting themselves financially, as well as being career-minded. One of the two men was also an MBA student, but sponsored by his employer, one of the major Japanese paper manufacturers. The other was a PhD student in Applied Mathematics who funded himself by receiving a scholarship and working part-time as an interpreter for the BBC in London.

- Thirdly, when all mentions were classified into nine areas in accordance with their content, only one area, issues related to finance, had more mentions from men than women; and only one area, issues related to language, had almost the same number of mentions by women and men. The number of mentions made by women was higher in most areas; and noticeably, issues related to parents had no mentions from men.

## **5.2 Overview of 'educational life'**

I shall now focus on the analysis of students' 'educational life'. Issues concerning courses, the language, and the living environment are classified in this category, as shown in Table 5-2, in accordance with the content of responses. I classified issues concerning finance with 'personal life', judging from the content of the comments I received. Such issues have attracted much attention as a (major) problem for international students along with issues concerning courses, the language, and the living environment (see, for example, Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Burns, 1991; Mullins et al., 1995; Li et al., 1997). This suggests that issues concerning finance have been considered as essentially related to educational lives. Both questions asked and results reported are therefore often related to tuition fees, currency rates, and living expenses, i.e. in terms of whether international students lead a financially comfortable life or not.

However, as I will report in more detail, the respondents in this study, Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London, referred quite differently to issues concerning finance; relating to parents, spouse and friends, and not necessarily to how much money they had, or how much they could spend. I therefore decided to report these issues in the chapter on 'personal life'.

The following table is adapted from Table 5-1 to focus on the three areas of 'educational life' alone. They appear familiar to us as the subjects of research on international students through the two kinds of literature which already exist: discussion-based literature on how host countries should support international students (see, for example, Church, 1982; Niven, 1987b; Ballard, 1989; Schütze, 1989; Wright, 1997), and research-based literature, although the locations are not necessarily in the UK (Klineberg and Hull IV, 1979; Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Burns, 1991; Li et al., 1997). The findings in this chapter may not therefore be as new as those in the following chapter. However, they require equal attention, because, as I have already mentioned, some issues in educational life interact with those in personal life.

**Table 5-2 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to educational life**

Area*	Women		Men		Total	
	No. of mentions**	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents
<b>(1) Course</b>	19	12	9	8	28	20
<b>(2) Language</b>	13	11	12	10	25	21
<b>(3) Living environment</b>	10	6	3	3	13	9
<b>Sub total</b>	42	17	24	15	66	32
<b>No issues mentioned in educational life</b>	-	8	-	12	-	25
<b>N</b>	-	25	-	27	-	52

\* Each area covers several issues.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several issues.

Table 5-2 shows a similar picture to Table 5-1 as a whole in terms of the gender difference seen in the totals: more women than men mentioned issues related to educational life and the average number of mentions is much higher for women than men. Eight women and twelve men (including the one woman and two men who did not mention any issues at all) did not refer to issues in their educational life. While there were no commonalities clear enough to mention among these men, the women interestingly included a disproportionate number who mentioned many issues in their personal life.<sup>52</sup> It would seem they were emotionally secure as students, but not as single women and/or daughters, as will be examined in the following chapter.

### **5.3 Issues related to the course**

The course was the most common area of concern for Japanese postgraduate students in their educational lives, although there were an almost equal number of mentions related to language, and the two areas are obviously interrelated. One of the common thoughts that I heard among Japanese students, including those who did not participate in this study, was that the workload was much greater than they had imagined.

There are four features to notice in the following Table 5-3. Firstly, women made more than twice as many mentions as men, and it is apparent from the number of issues which women mentioned that the issues which they encountered in their courses varied among the individuals. Secondly, all ten issues can be roughly categorised under five headings: the demands of study, lack of confidence, loneliness, lack of study skills, and disappointment with the course. Thirdly, mentions on 'Pushed by time limits', 'Worried if I can get good enough marks to go on to a higher level programme', 'Lonely work' implied differences between genders, though the numbers are small. Fourthly, it is clear from the relationship between the number of mentions and that of respondents that some women encountered two or more issues, while men mentioned only one. As a whole, like many other areas, the course raised more issues for more women, especially women MA students, than men while studying abroad, and in

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<sup>52</sup> The five who mentioned issues in their personal life most were W6, W10, W14, W21, and W 23, and the last three women did not mention any issues in their educational life.



somewhat different ways.

**Table 5-3 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to their course**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(1) Course	Pushed by time limits	6	2	8
	Too much course-work	3	1	4
	Worried if I can get good enough marks to go on to a higher level programme	3	0	3
	Feel inferiority towards my course-mates	2	0	2
	Lonely work	1	5	6
	The ways of structuring essays is different between the UK and Japan	1	0	1
	Suffering a setback	1	0	1
	Mastering how to use the computer is hard	1	0	1
	Used to earn money by doing the same thing as I do on my current course	1	0	1
	Classes were too hard to follow at the beginning	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions</b>	19	9	28
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	12	9	21
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	13	18	31
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some women respondents mentioned several issues.

Nevertheless, more than half of both women and men, and more men than women, did not mention any issues related to their courses. This indicates that many students felt they had attained some degree of success with their studies.

Some women, MA students, referred to being 'pushed by time limits'. Some referred generally to the limitation of time while others specifically mentioned that they had course-work or dissertations not yet started; but they were all nervous about the expiration of their courses. An example is W2, one of a few women who seldom mentioned issues throughout the interview, and who was career-minded.

I am really worried whether I can get a job. That's my greatest concern. I wonder if I can get a job soon, or a job that I want to do. Well... *I'm worried whether I can complete my course in time.* (laughs)

[W2, single, late 20s, MA in Comparative Education, full-time]

Looking for a job and completing her course in time were W2's only anxieties during her stay in the UK, unlike many other women who encountered various issues. Another woman, W1, repeatedly mentioned throughout the interview that she had been unsuccessful in writing up all her course-work because she tended to spend too much time writing flawless pieces of course-work.

*I'm worried whether I can complete my course in August and if I can satisfy myself with what I'll have done in the end. There is course-work, which I haven't written up because I haven't felt like getting started on it; I just have no energy to put into it. I'm just pushed by time limits.* But I still don't want to get a 'C' [as a result].

[W1, single, early 30s, MA in TESOL, full-time]

In contrast, fewer men expressed such feelings: one referred to the time limit in relation to writing his MA dissertation, and another was frustrated by his slow progress in writing his PhD thesis.

Thus, on the one hand, women appeared to be less confident about their self-efficacy, and on the other, all the respondents who mentioned time pressure were MA students, except for one man PhD student. The chief reason seems to be because this was the first time for many of these students received formal education in a foreign country, and they required time to get accustomed to this. Although some who showed lack of confidence in relation to their courses had studied abroad before, this was usually limited to learning English at language schools, or to short courses, i.e. non-degree courses. They therefore needed to adjust to formal education in the UK (Klineberg and Hull IV, 1979; Niven, 1987b; Samuelowicz, 1987; Burns, 1991). To make matters worse, British MA courses last only one year in general and the deadlines for their course-work are often strictly defined: both of these constantly pressure students to study hard and to manage their time well. Compared with MA courses, PhD courses last at least two years and students are responsible for their time. Thus, they may feel less pressure, but at the same time are at greater risk of time mismanagement.

(Phillips and Pugh, 1994: 83).

Three women talked about being worried as to whether they would achieve good enough marks to proceed to a higher-level programme. They were all studying at different postgraduate levels. For example, the following woman was an MA student and thinking about going on to take a PhD course.

If I were in my mid 20s, I would have thought that an MA was good enough for me and been more relaxed about studying than I am now. *But when I think about taking a PhD course [in the future], I can't help worrying about the result I will get in this course.* I will be also ashamed when I go back to Japan, if I get a poor result.

[W1, single, early 30s, MA in TESOL, full-time]

W1 was extremely worried about whether she could get enough marks to proceed. As shown earlier (p. 91), W1 also mentioned her feeling of being pushed by the time limit. Moreover, she mentioned her worry about the reaction from other people if she were to get a poor result. She therefore experienced many issues regarding one area at the same time. There were other women who encountered many issues in the same way as W1: they all also tended to have more issues in other areas, like W1. One woman, an MPhil/PhD student, was worried about whether she could pass the up-grading examination to be a PhD candidate, and said, 'I'm really afraid of being kicked out by my college!' Another was anxious about whether she could get enough marks to go on to an MA course from her current diploma course.

In contrast, no men referred to their worries about whether or not they could get enough marks to proceed to a higher level programme, although two men MA students were desperate to go on to PhD courses.

There seem to be three possible reasons behind this gender difference. One is that, generally speaking, women are less likely to be confident and more likely to underestimate their performance than men (Moses, 1990; Skelton, 1997: 314; Brina et. al, 1999: 39). Such lack of confidence can prejudice their chances of success in academic career (Heward, 1996). Another is that women are more ready to reveal their lack of confidence to other people in general, and to a woman in an interview. Finally, these women may be less determined to go on to higher level programmes than the men, insofar as women return to higher education for 'experiment, reassessment, opening up

possibilities, rather than ... building a plan around a clear goal' (Pascall and Cox, 1993: 73). In this respect, these women might have allowed themselves to think about failing to realise their aspirations, unlike the two men.

Five men referred to 'Lonely work', and this was the only issue which more men than women mentioned. All of them (two PhD and three postdoctoral students) were on courses which entailed much isolation, having little contact with students in the same situation and/or spending much time in laboratories by themselves (OECD, 1995: 150; Brina et al., 1999: 42). On taught MA or diploma courses, or in the field of arts, students can have more time to share with course-mates.

In contrast, there was only one woman who mentioned her loneliness on her course: an MSc student in histopathology. She had course mates, but all except for her had medical backgrounds and this isolated her.

Generally speaking, more men than women are on PhD and postdoctoral courses (Moses, 1990: 9; Wright, 1997: 96; Brina et al., 1999: 32; HESA, 1999: 8). Statistically, then, loneliness in educational life is more likely to be a problem for men than for women students.

However, there are also other possible factors that cause students loneliness. International students may find it difficult to socialise in an English way, for instance, by going to a pub (Burns, 1991: 66). There are also some students, particularly PhD students on long courses, who work part-time to fund themselves and who cannot spare much time for socialisation (Delamont and Eggleston, 1983: 28; Burns, 1991: 66; Brina et al., 1999: 45). Moreover, taking a long time to complete their courses means finding more money for living expenses, and for tuition fees which cost nearly three times as much as for home students. In the case of students sponsored by their employers, they are often given only one year (occasionally two years) to complete their courses. Students are therefore often so pressured to complete their courses as soon as possible that they tend to isolate themselves in the library or their rooms. This isolation may be compounded for women, for whom reasons of safety may make them reluctant to go out late in the evenings.

There were, however, students on PhD or postdoctoral courses who did not mention loneliness. They appeared to be outgoing, to have good friends, some of whom

were Japanese, and/or to be married and accompanied by their families.<sup>53</sup>

In relation to the problem of loneliness raised by students on PhD and postdoctoral courses, the amount of interpersonal contact time per day of their time in the UK by location, gender and study level, was examined. The following Table 5-4 is based on the questionnaire conducted with the same 52 respondents.

**Table 5-4 Amount of contact time by location, gender, and type of study**

		(minutes per day)					
		On the same courses	Within the same institutions	With supervisors & tutors	Within the same accommodation	Others	Total min/day
<b>Women</b>	Research course (PhD/postdoc.*)	54.6	39.0	38.0	145.2	49.2	326.0
	Taught course (Dip/MA)	68.1	67.0	28.9	75.4	41.9	281.4
	Average	65.4	61.4	30.8	92.0	43.8	293.4
<b>Men</b>	Research course (PhD/postdoc.)	69.7	43.7	18.0	103.6	72.3	307.3
	Taught course (Dip/MA)	107.6	108.2	12.0	116.4	27.8	372.0
	Average	90.7	79.5	14.8	111.0	50.1	346.1

\* There were no women postdoctoral students. MPhil/PhD students are all categorised under this group.

\*\* The amount of contact time is calculated based on the different numbers of students at each level of study: two women and two men in diploma, 18 women and 13 men on MA, five women on PhD, and eight men on PhD, and four men in postdoctoral courses.

Before examining Table 5-4, two points must be borne in mind. One is that the respondents in this study were all students at the University of London, and their accommodation was dispersed, unlike that of campus universities in the provinces. Therefore, the respondents may have had less contact with people at their institutions, including those from the same courses and institutions, as well as with supervisors or tutors, than students at campus universities. The other is that there seemed to be many international students, often men, at the University of London who were sponsored by their employers, and are often accompanied by their spouses. This study reflected this tendency.<sup>54</sup>

Table 5-4 shows clear differences between students on diploma and MA courses

<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of the disadvantage of married students accompanied by their families, see Section 6.3.

and those on PhD and postdoctoral courses in both the extent of their contact with people from the same courses and with those from the same institutions. This tendency is seen across both genders. Evidently, PhD and postdoctoral students are, indeed, in a position to feel lonelier than those on diploma and MA courses because they have less contact, although they have slightly more contact with their supervisors than those in the other group.

Secondly, if we pay attention in the Table 5-4 to contact at the same accommodation, students on PhD and postdoctoral courses, especially women, appear to have plenty of time for this. The reason is that many of these students live with their spouses or parents. (This also applies to men students on diploma and MA courses.) It is therefore possible to say that students on PhD and postdoctoral courses who have someone to talk to at home are lucky, but those who do not can be extremely lonely, having few people to talk to either on campus or at home (Delamont and Eggleston, 1983).

Thirdly, the loneliness of students on PhD and postdoctoral courses, in other words research degree courses, 'on campus' has attracted attention (Delamont and Eggleston, 1983; Hatt et al., 1999). However, we need to be aware of loneliness off-campus, too. As Table 5-4 shows, the group of students which had least communication with other people were women on diploma and MA courses, because more women than men were single and lived on their own (see also Section 5.4).

The following is a comment made by a man who had been a PhD student for nearly ten years, and was about to complete his thesis. In his account, he had spent so much time writing his thesis because work on his subject, English Language and Medieval Literature, was extremely time-consuming, especially for non-native speakers of English. In ten years, he had never gone back to Japan to save time as well as money. He was also working part-time as a teacher of Japanese in a Japanese private school in central London.

*[Unlike in Japan] No one offers her/his help [until I ask for it] in this country, and I have to do everything by myself. No one helps me. Of course, my supervisor gives me some advice, but I have to complete what I want to do by myself in this country. I feel*

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<sup>54</sup> See Verthelyi's (1995) study on the situation of married international postgraduate students in the US.

*pressure and hardship in this respect.*<sup>55</sup>

[M41, single, early 40s, PhD in English and Medieval Literature, full-time]

The total amount of contact time per day, which he reported, was 78 minutes. My first impression of him was that he was unapproachable because of his unusual age as a student, and his serious demeanour as well as his courtesy. However, as I spent time with him for my research, he quickly demonstrated friendliness and humour, as if he had demolished the barrier he had set around himself. He was also frank enough to tell me how, over several years, he had enjoyed going to the pub every Tuesday with his old Japanese friend, M36. He had met M36 at the college where he did an MA, and could share his interest; it was M36 who had introduced me to him for my research. At the end of the interview, I was even asked to join them every week.

Another example is of a postdoctoral student in biology, with financial support from his company, an electrical goods manufacturer in Japan.

*It is ideal for me to enjoy having a chat with anyone, being in a foreign country, but I'm not that kind of person. In addition, when I'm conducting an experiment, I have to be quiet and count the numbers many times. I don't have time to speak with anyone. So the reality of my life is far from ideal. It is nearly one year already, and I regret that I have not had more free time to talk with people. I feel pressure that I must have more time to speak with other people, but I haven't achieved this aim yet.*

[M55, married, late 30s, Postdoctoral, in Biology]

He reported 33 minutes per day as his total amount of contact time, which was even shorter than M41's. I visited him on a Saturday afternoon in late February. He took me to his laboratory in the basement: the room was as big as a classroom, and two huge machines occupied two thirds of the room. He briefly explained them to me, and said that he usually shared the room with another student who was working on a different project, although the person was not in on the day I visited him. During the two and a half hours I was in his laboratory for my research, only one person came in: a woman student in a white coat exchanged some words with him, fetched an instrument she needed, and quickly returned to her laboratory.

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<sup>55</sup> In accordance with academic convention, I have added words in parenthesis where this is necessary to

Three other men who admitted to loneliness had much more contact time each day. M33, a postdoctoral student in histopathology, reported 5 hours and 33 minutes, M51, an MA student in contemporary cultural process, reported 4 hours and 7 minutes, and M32, an MPhil/PhD student in industrial relations and personal management, said 2 hours and 15 minutes. M33 was accompanied by his wife, and M51 and M32 seemed to have many friends from the same institution. Why did they still mention that they felt lonely? The differences in contact time between men who reported loneliness in relation to a little amount of contact time per day (M41 and M55), and those who reported loneliness, in spite of a much greater amount (M32, M33, and M51) suggest a further important point. The former group felt lonely because of the actual amount of contact time with other people, while the latter group mentioned their loneliness because their need to study alone made them lonely (Delamont and Eggleston, 1983).

Examining the loneliness they mentioned reminds me of two women students: we smile at each other and only say 'hello' whenever we meet on campus. They are both Asian, probably from Hong-Kong or Taiwan. I am quite sure that they are both doctoral students because I have never seen either of them talking with more than two students. They are always alone, and often in the library, like me. We started greeting each other more than two years ago, but strangely enough we have not introduced ourselves to each other yet (and may never do so), so none of us knows the other's name. However, whenever I meet them and greet them, I feel a little happy afterwards. I have also recently come to realise that when I see students on the campus from East Asian countries, and in particular those from Hong-Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan who share similar values to the Japanese, I often feel as if they were good companions; although I have yet to speak to them despite these feelings I have. I am sure that this is a result of my loneliness on the campus, since this sense of loneliness disappears once I am off campus.

Strangely, I do not feel the same way towards most of the Japanese students. I prefer to keep some distance from them, because I feel scared of being assessed as to how appropriate or deviant I am in a Japanese context, by being asked many questions. This is 'the hidden negotiation' I have developed through being an international student for some years. Moreover, I have realised that the meaning of questions sometimes

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clarify or preserve the meaning intended by the participants.



changes depending on the nationality of the person who asks. In the case of non-Japanese people, I tend to interpret them as showing that they are interested in me, but in the case of Japanese people, I sometimes feel I am being judged.

#### 5.4 Issues related to the language

Many people who have never been abroad or never lived abroad for a long time tend to believe that people who have studied abroad for more than a few months will automatically become fluent with the language of their destinations. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In reality, there seem to be very many students who are depressed and anxious about their language proficiency, and struggle to improve it.

**Table 5-5 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to their language**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(2) Language	Lack of language proficiency	11	10	21
	English is too different from Japanese to master	1	0	1
	Have little time left to brush up my English	0	2	2
	Too old to master English	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	13	12	25
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	11	10	21
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	14	17	31
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several issues.

There are two points to be noted in Table 5-5. Firstly, the greatest number of mentions of issues related to Language was in 'Lack of language proficiency', noted by 21 respondents. This was the highest number not only in the area of language, but in all the education areas; and the highest number of mentions (25) across the division into educational life and personal life. It also had the highest number of mentions made by women and by men. Secondly, all the students who referred to issues related to

language encountered a lack of language proficiency. Thirdly, the total number of mentions by men in this area was almost equal to women, which suggests that the language problem is an issue common to both women and men.

Those who did not mention it were in two groups: those whose English appeared to be very good, i.e. those who had spent an extensive amount of time abroad, including returnee children; and those who did not mention any issues related to educational life.

This does not necessarily mean that those who did not mention it were superior to those who did so. Some students whose English was excellent (for example, an interpreter with the BBC and a student who had scored nearly 650 in TOEFL) also expressed their concern about their English.

The mentions of 'Lack of language proficiency' were made across both genders and regardless of level of study and the length of stay abroad, indicating how common the language problem was for half of the students. This was despite the fact that they were all expected to have a relatively high standard of language proficiency: the admission requirements of English proficiency for postgraduate level programmes at most of the institutions and colleges belonging to the University of London range from 6.5 to 7.0 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and 600 in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).<sup>56</sup> There does seem, however, to be some exceptional cases (Tonkyn, 1995: 49, 55). This suggests that one reason why so many students encounter problems with language may be the inadequacy of the measures of language proficiency, which do not cover the multiplicity of tasks of tertiary education, as well as the uncertain range of English language proficiency of entrants to postgraduate schools (Niven, 1987b: 157; Tonkyn, 1995; Coley, 1999: 9, 14). Another reason might be the acceptance of exceptional cases as a result of the need for cash from full-fee paying international students (The Independent, 2 December 1999). But if colleges and institutions accept students who do not have the required level of English proficiency, both lecturers and students have difficulty in class (Coley, 1999: 8).

In addition to these reasons, there seems, however, to be another reason behind the students' frustration about their English; the struggle to improve their English due to an endless desire to improve their English. If we take a close look at their comments, we

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<sup>56</sup> On The British Council' website, 18 institutions and colleges of the University of London specify their entrance requirement of English proficiency for their postgraduate level programmes. Most of them specify it in both IELTS and TOEFL, while others do so in IELTS only.

see great variety for both genders. Most comments were relatively general, such as, 'My English is not good', 'I can't speak English as well as natives do', and 'I get frustrated when I can't speak English well'. In contrast, a few mentions were more detailed: in relation to daily life, course-work, disappointment with the small amount of progress made in English, and discrimination because of inadequate English. The following are examples of these concerns.

The first, M50, was an MA student who had been in the UK for two and a half years when I interviewed him. He referred to the funny yet bitter experience, which he had had recently in relation to lack of language proficiency.

*The most serious problem is English for me. For example, there are occasions that I realise that I have paid much more than I should have. Just recently, I bought some bananas and I had to weigh them [to check the price for them] by choosing the button for bananas. But I chose the wrong button by mistake and it was for mushrooms. (...) I later realised that I had paid nearly £3 for only four bananas! The money is OK for me now, but I regret that I accepted my mistake silently because I hesitated to complain.*

[M50, single, late 20s, MA in Fine art (Painting), full-time]

The second example is W12, an MPhil/PhD student who originally came to accompany her husband who was on an MSc course (and is now on a PhD course): this was her third year in the UK. She went to a language school first, but she soon got bored, left the school, and enrolled on a diploma course in education at the institution where she is currently studying. She became interested in furthering her study while she was taking a diploma course, took an MA, and is now an MPhil/PhD student. She was hoping to be a university lecturer in the future. She is one of two wives who originally came to accompany their husbands and became determined to pursue her own study and career.

*There are occasions when I can't understand things because of my English. I'm irritated when I can't put ideas easily into my mind when I'm reading, and I think 'I can't complete my research if this situation continues'. I can't always understand, even when my supervisor speaks to me in an explanatory manner, actually I often come across this kind of situation. Whenever it happens, I get terribly depressed.*

[W12, married, early 30s, MPhil/PhD in Women's Studies, full-time]<sup>57</sup>

W12 is typical in that she referred to her lack of English proficiency in relation to the advancement of her study (Aboutrabi, 1995: 58; Li et al., 1997: 35).

PhD student W7 had been an English teacher at a high school in Japan for 17 years, and is in her sixth year in the UK.<sup>58</sup> I had happened to listen to her presentation in a conference before meeting her for this study, and had a strong impression that her English was fluent and that she had little difficulty in the question period. However, her thoughts on her English were quite different from my impression of her:

*English. Neither my speaking nor writing has improved as much as I had expected. I wish I could speak and write English better. My English may be better than those whose speciality is not English. However, I wish my English could be better, although I should not compare myself with native speakers.*

[W7, single, late 40s, PhD in African Literature, full-time]

M40 seemed to be actively organising study groups for students who were interested in cultural studies all over the UK in addition to his PhD study, and this was his fourth year in the UK. In contrast to my immediate image that he must be good at English, he described his frustration as follows:

*... There are many occasions when I get frustrated because of my inadequate English. (...) Some people are patient and listen to me, but others show their irritation as if they wanted to tell me that I was in the UK, so I should speak good English. When I meet the latter group of people, I feel difficulties.*

[M40, married with a child, early 30s, MPhil/PhD in Sociology]

It is obvious the standard of language proficiency these students sought, as well as that which they thought they were required, was extremely high and sometimes as high as the level of native speakers, due to the peculiarity of their living environment. As a result, few students could be satisfied with their English proficiency, since their infinite

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<sup>57</sup> W12's comment here was regarded only as a matter of English and therefore categorised under 'Lack of English proficiency' only. This comment was detached from '(1) Course', because if she could have solved the problem of her English, she would not have faced the difficulties she mentioned in the extract.

desire to improve their English ensured that they were frustrated. Also, as is clearly shown in the comments of M50, W7, and M40, many of the students were particularly irritated by their lack of proficiency in oral English. It is interesting to look in this context how much the participants had exposed themselves to situations in which they had to communicate in English in order to develop their speaking skills.

The following Table 5-6 shows the result of the questionnaire item in which I asked the same 52 respondents about the three nationalities to whom they talked the most.

**Table 5-6 Top three nationalities with whom respondents talked, by gender**

	1st		2nd		3rd	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Japanese</b>	18	19	3	5	3	1
<b>British</b>	3	4	10	9	9	
<b>Korean</b>	1	3	1	1		3
<b>Chinese</b>	1		3	2		
<b>Taiwanese</b>		1		1		4
<b>Hong Kong</b>	1		2			
<b>Italian</b>				2	1	3
<b>Total*</b>	24	27	19	20	13	11

\* Some respondents did not mention.

Table 5-6 clearly shows that respondents spent most time with Japanese people, and the British were second across both genders. Moreover, as a whole, there was a clear tendency for both women and men to talk with people from the same region, East Asia.

The following Table 5-7 shows in minutes per day the length of contact by language, nationality, gender, and study level, to indicate how long the respondents spent speaking in Japanese and English respectively. It is clear that students had most contact with Japanese people, which means they spoke their mother tongue for a considerable amount of time, across both genders and at all study levels. It is also interesting to note that students, especially men students on diploma and MA courses, communicate with people of other nationalities more in total than with the British,

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<sup>58</sup> High schools in Japan are for students aged at 16-18.

although they probably communicate with these people in English. Thirdly, all the groups of students, except for women students on diploma or MA courses, tended to communicate in Japanese for between two and two and a half hours per day on average. The group of women students on diploma or MA courses was exceptional because most of them, 18 out of 20, lived on their own (see also Section 5.3). Similarly, all the groups except women students on PhD courses, tended to communicate in English for two to three hours per day on average. The group of women students on PhD courses had exceptionally short times for communication in English because many of these students were living with their spouses or parents and they tended to spend more time with their families than with any other people (see also the analysis of Table 5-4).

**Table 5-7 Time spent in oral communication by language, nationality, gender, and study level**

(minutes per day)						
	Language used	Japanese	English			Total min/day
	Nationality	Japanese	British	Other nationalities	Total	
<b>Women</b>	Research course (PhD/postdoc.*)	150.6	37.2	45.0	82.2	232.8
	Taught course (Dip/MA)	84.2	65.4	79.3	144.7	228.9
	Average	97.4	59.8	72.4	132.2	229.6
<b>Men</b>	Research course (PhD/postdoc.*)	144.4	66.1	86.8	152.9	297.3
	Taught course (Dip/MA)	129.8	60.1	115.5	175.6	305.5
	Average	136.3	62.8	102.8	165.6	301.9

\* See notes on p. 94

The absolute time given to oral communication in English appears not to be enough to improve their English for any group of students. One of the major reasons is their tendency, noted earlier, to communicate with people of the same nationality, and another being that they were so busy with their course-work that they tended to spend most of their time by themselves (Burns, 1991: 70-71) even though they knew they needed to practise their oral English. Moreover, many students might have felt in the same way as M51 did: 'When I am tired of studying, I feel like talking with Japanese people because talking to them requires little energy.'

Examining the comments made by respondents and the result of the questionnaire suggests that there is no correlation either between improvement in the language and living in a foreign country, or between improvement in the language and the length of the stay in that country. Rather, what is important for such improvement seems to be ensuring there is adequate time to use the language. Unfortunately, many students, regardless of gender or study level, seemed to be unsuccessful in this.

There were two men, both postdoctoral students in pharmaceuticals and accompanied by their wives, who attended a language course run by another college of the University of London in the morning twice a week. One of them said, 'My biggest concern is that people may be shocked by my poor English and think "Did he really spend two years in England?" I feel very pressured'. However, they were, in a way, lucky to be able to afford the money, time, and energy to attend such a course. Many students are on a tight budget, and under constant pressure to submit their course-work on time. Moreover, many students pay additional fees for their personally hired English tutors who correct the written English in their essays and dissertations. This costs £10 to 15 per hour. The reasons why these students do this are that written English is crucial to those assignments (Schütze, 1989: 149), and therefore tends to be prioritised, and that tutorial time for language support from the colleges is extremely limited and the time schedule is not as flexible as hiring personal tutors.

## **5.5 Issues related to the living environment**

It is common for Japanese students, especially young students, to congregate on a street, in a cafeteria and a classroom, and many postgraduate students are no exception. Whenever we see such a scene, we tend to assume that they get together because they get along with each other. However, in reality, there seems to be a variety of motives behind the students' behaviour.

The following Table 5-8 indicates three interesting points. Firstly, there were a total of 13 mentions of issues related to the living environment, and three times as many were made by women as by men. Secondly, as is clear from the number of issues, the mentions made by women were varied. Thirdly, women tended to experience one or more issues related to the living environment, while each man encountered only one

issue. These three points indicate that more women than men were facing various issues over their living environment, and in a more complex manner. At the same time, there was a commonality in those issues related to loneliness and relationships with Japanese people in the UK. While some students depend on the Japanese community, at the same time they sometimes feel constrained by this. Concerns over accommodation, the centre of their living environment, seem to be strongly connected with these issues.

**Table 5-8 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issued related to their living environment**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
<b>(3) Living environment</b>	Feel lonely, living in the UK	3	2	5
	Have too much contact with Japanese people	2	1	3
	Health has deteriorated (because of my living environment)	2	0	2
	Cannot get along with other Japanese students	1	0	1
	Suffer from noise from my neighbours	1	0	1
	There is discrimination among Japanese people in the UK	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	10	3	13
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	6	3	9
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	19	24	43
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some women respondents mentioned several issues.

Some postgraduate students choose to live in any other kind of accommodation than college accommodation, usually residences, into which many students, including undergraduates, are packed. There are several reasons behind their choice. Firstly, the longer the length of stay, the more stressful the stay in college accommodation is due to the limited facilities and many formal rules and required 'implicit' socialisation rules.



These include those one has to follow if there are students from ones own country.<sup>59</sup> This applies especially to PhD students, who tend to spend two or more years on their studies. Secondly, some students are married, sometimes with children, and they need more space, but the accommodation the university provides is often limited and intended more for single students (Niven, 1987b: 151; Hughes, 1990; Lewins, 1990: 92-93). Thirdly, some students are wealthy. Good examples are students sponsored by their employers who have little worry about accommodation costs because their employers pay a considerable sum of money for their rent.<sup>60</sup> The average rent of flats for a married couple (with children) who studied abroad with financial support from their employers was £1,268 per month; for single men or a married man who studied abroad without his family with the financial support from their employers, it was £765 per month.

However, in return for their more comfortable life outside college accommodation, students sometimes pay a painful price. Living on their own causes such problems as loneliness and lack of time to practise English. In particular, from the beginning, PhD and postdoctoral students are often lonely and do not have much chance to communicate with other people. If they live with their families (in which case, their spouses and children are often Japanese), they avoid isolation, but they tend to speak much more Japanese than English at home. The two who made mentions categorised under 'Have little time left to brush up my English' were indeed both married men accompanied by their wives and children.

In contrast, other students, often doing diplomas and MAs, live in college accommodation, because they can secure an adequate room before they leave their home countries without the need to be on the spot to looking for accommodation. College accommodation is good enough for a short period, in terms of facilities and the food provided, the location usually convenient and a suitable place to make friends, improve one's English, and avoid loneliness. However, students from ones own country can still be a source of problems as regards the improvement of language proficiency, since students are tempted to bunch together with those who share the same

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<sup>59</sup> Although I sometimes hear complaints about the inadequacy of facilities, space and staff in college accommodation as well as colleges among students I know, there was no one who mentioned the issue among the participants.

<sup>60</sup> See Khalwa (1999) for explanation of the prosperous lifestyles of people who are sent abroad by their employers and Dore (1998: 784-785) for elitism in Japan.

culture and speak the same language.

A good example of this is a woman student whom I met recently who currently lives in college accommodation. She will, however, soon leave to live with an English family because there were too many Japanese where she is, and she has realised that she is often willing to be with them and to speak Japanese. This is not good for her, as she is desperate to improve her English.

Since native students tend to live in private accommodation and enjoy a freer life, or else outside central London because of the living expenses, most residents in college accommodation are international students (Uehara and Hicks, 1989: 137). Moreover, since there seem to be courses on which there are more Japanese than British students, mixing with the British appears to be as hard as avoiding contact with the Japanese.

Nevertheless, most of the respondents did not refer to issues related to their living environment, including accommodation. This suggests they were relatively comfortable with it.

## **5.6 Summary and discussion**

All the students, except one woman and two men, referred to issues related to studying abroad. The number of mentions made by women was nearly twice those of men in all nine areas. This is similar to Li and Kaye's findings in their survey conducted with international students at a UK university, where there were more frequent problems in seven out of eight areas for women than men (Li and Kaye, 1998: 46).<sup>61</sup> The only areas which showed nearly equal numbers of mentions between women and men in the present study were finance and language. Otherwise, individual women tended to have more issues than men. Moreover, as we shall see in Section 6.6, issues related to parents were peculiar to women: there were no mentions made by men in this area.

This chapter has looked at issues related to courses, language, and the living environment. I classified issues related to the living environment under 'educational life' and those related to the finance into 'personal life' because of the content of

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<sup>61</sup> Except for financial problems, which more men referred to, more women mentioned problems to do with academic progress, accommodation, teaching and tutoring, homesick, isolation, mixing with UK

comments made by respondents. Comments concerning 'educational life' were related to types of accommodation, especially college accommodation where one had more opportunity to mix with students from the same institution than with those from outside; and those related to 'personal life' were often mentioned in relation to thoughts on parents and friends.

Many studies on international students have only paid attention to issues related to their study life and to finance. As a result, those studies have reported only the major problems of their educational lives: language difficulty, difficulty of managing the demands of study, mixing with people of country of residence, and their financial situation (see, for example, Allen and Higgins, 1994; Aboutorabi, 1995; Li et al., 1997; Li and Kaye, 1998). Some of those studies also *only* seek interrelationships between the problems in students' educational life, and overlook the relationship with issues categorised under 'personal life' in this study (see, for example, Li et al. 1997; Li and Kaye 1998). In this study, however, of the five women who were single and who had mentioned issues in relation to their study abroad considerably more than other students, three did not mention any issues in their educational life.<sup>62</sup> In other words, although they had problems, these were concentrated on their personal life. Moreover, few studies on international students, including those which profess to be aware of gender issues (Mullins et al., 1995; Li et al., 1997), have paid attention to gender issues in any area of life.<sup>63</sup>

Few students in this study mentioned any experience of racism, although there seems to be a strong belief that non-Western people experience racism when living in Western countries among Western people.<sup>64</sup> Japanese students may have little awareness of racism due to their unfamiliarity with being racially discriminated against when living in Japan, their own country, compared with the Japanese British who may pick up the nuances more and have a less stable identity (Carter et al., 1999: 61, 64). However, this is no more than a hypothesis and it would be worthy of further study and

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students, and English language proficiency.

<sup>62</sup> The rest of the two mentioned a large number of issues in relation to both the educational life and the personal life.

<sup>63</sup> There are a few studies which examine the difference between women and men (for example, Burns, 1991; Uyeki 1993; Li and Kaye, 1998), and there are studies on women students only (for example, Bhalalusesa, 1998; Habu, 2000).

<sup>64</sup> Watanabe (1999), for example, describes in detail the racial discrimination he experienced through living in London as a Japanese.

investigation.<sup>65</sup>

Japanese postgraduates, both women and men, commonly lacked confidence in their self-efficacy, as noted also in Mullins et al.'s finding (Mullins et al., 1995: 211), although they do not differentiate women and men. This was particularly seen among women MA students in this study.

There seem to be five reasons why women MA students tended to mention their lack of confidence more than any other groups of students.

Firstly, generally speaking, women tend to be less personally confident than men.

Secondly, it was the first time for most of those students to be involved in formal education in the UK. This required them to become accustomed to the environment,<sup>66</sup> and they may have had difficulties in coping with it (Li and Kaye, 1998: 42). Those who graduated from Japanese universities or junior colleges find these 'heavens' after they have struggled hard to enter the most prestigious universities possible; there are few required assignments (Horio, 1988: 308; Thomas, 1993: 15; Habu, 2000: 60). It is well-known among Japanese people that it is difficult to graduate from universities in Western countries, while those in Japan are said to be hard to enter but easy to graduate from.<sup>67</sup> Even though Japanese students are therefore prepared for the strong demands of the British educational system, they were so accustomed to the Japanese university system that they could not adequately grasp the reality of how hard and different it would be (Burns, 1991). Moreover, they had no picture of the hardship, because many of them had little experience of studying in a class of native English speakers.

Thirdly, these students are always under pressure both to submit their course-work at a specified time, and to prepare extensively for the classes they are taking. The reason why more women than men tended to refer to the workload seems to be that more women than men study abroad straight after graduating from Japanese

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<sup>65</sup> Personally speaking, I had never seen myself as the subject of racism until I was told by my supervisor to investigate participants' experiences of racial intolerance.

<sup>66</sup> Much research has been conducted on the adjustment of international students. See Chapter 3 for more discussion.

<sup>67</sup> There are a variety of universities, from prestigious to low-level, in Japan. However, everyone is the same in that she/he studies hard to pass the entrance examination for a better university. It is a serious issue in Japan that some students, and mothers who have stronger responsibility for their children's education than fathers who are too busy at work, suffer from neuroses or commit suicide because of stress or the exam. Such circumstances are described as '*juken jigoku* (hell of taking entrance examinations)'. Generally speaking, in contrast with the difficulty of obtaining a university place, students can have an easy campus life, because of the low workload required by their universities. A similar tendency is also seen in postgraduate schools in Japan. See Ushiogi (1993: 307).

universities: men tend to have more work experience, and see student life as much easier than occupational life (see, for example, M38 cited on p. 125 and M34 on p. 126).

Fourthly, women may be unclear about their future goal after completing their courses, which may strengthen their anxiety during the period of their study abroad.

Finally, women may feel freer to show their lack of confidence than men, partly because of my being a woman interviewer.

As the number of respondents was small in this study, caution is required in drawing general conclusions. Nevertheless, the findings concerning educational life suggest the necessity of insight into differences between genders and levels of study, and the outcome of the interaction between these two factors. Moreover, some concern among women about whether they would be good enough to proceed to a higher level programme was, as mentioned earlier, an indication of their indecisiveness about their future, unlike men who tended to have clear goals for their career development. Further exploration of women international students from a gender perspective is essential to discover how to support such women psychologically during their period of study abroad, and to encourage them to use the knowledge they gain in the future.

There was also an issue seen more among men than women related to loneliness. Most of the lonely men were on PhD or postdoctoral courses, which meant that many spend a lot of time on their own. Although women may share this issue, it is more common for men because there are more men on PhD or postdoctoral courses. Delamont et al. (1997) report that in the natural sciences, PhD students often get help from postdoctoral students, who are always around them and easy to approach, which might give an impression that neither party has a problem of loneliness. However, as another study by Delamont and this study suggest, any PhD (and postgraduate) student can fall into the situation of feeling lonely (Delamont and Eggleston, 1983). In addition, the difference between the situation which Li and Kaye (1998: 48) report, where 'isolated students tend to be ones who also experience academic difficulties', and my own study need clarification. Informants in both studies felt lonely, but while Li and Kaye's informants felt lonely because of their own limited communication abilities, my informants felt lonely because of the nature of their studies. In this respect, the importance of gaining more insight into the differences among international students is reinforced.

It became clear that while PhD students could easily be lonely on campus,

regardless of gender, women on diploma and MA courses spent least time in interpersonal communication each day than any other group. More people in this group tended to be single and living on their own, and studying and living in London may have contributed to their feeling a greater sense of loneliness than those at campus universities. Women on diploma and MA courses thus deserve equal attention to PhD students, whose loneliness has been a concern of a number of scholars (Phillips and Pugh, 1994; Hatt et al., 1999; Leonard, 2001).

For such students, there seems to be 'get together parties' organised by course tutors and accommodation officers to provide students with an opportunity to meet each other, often at the end of term and at Christmas time. But ideally such events should be more frequent, and reflect students' needs as much as possible.

As in other studies (Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Elsey, 1990; Allen and Higgins, 1994), lack of language proficiency was a great concern among respondents. It was the most common issue as well as the only one common to women and men. Many students, regardless of gender, level of study or length of stay in the UK, mentioned it and described how frustrated they felt in various situations. As has been pointed out in Australia, one reason for their frustration may be that the IELTS or TOEFL evidence they submitted on entry to their postgraduate courses did not necessarily allow adequate measurement of their language proficiency for academic purposes. It is a problem not only for institutions but also for students if institutions accept other tests, or admit 'exceptional' cases for business reasons that did not reach these institutions' language entry requirements.<sup>68</sup> However, this study also shows that students spent most of their time in their academic environment, where the standard of English spoken and the level they think is required are both high. Their desire to improve their English was infinite.

I could not identify whether language was the most important issue for the respondents in this study because I did not ask them to rank their problems - unlike Samuelowicz (1987) who reports that English language proficiency was ranked the most important problem by both staff and international students at the University of Queensland. What became clear was that this was the most *common* problem among both women and men. In addition, it would be a misunderstanding to read

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<sup>68</sup> Due to the recent cuts in educational funding, UK universities are competing fiercely to gain full-fee paying international students (Sloman 1990, 5; Harris, 1995: 77; The Independent, 2 December 1999; THES, 28 July 2000).

Samuelowicz's report and immediately conclude that international students' most important problem is language proficiency, since Samuelowicz examined only the educational lives of international students. In my study, personal issues related to marriage and parents appeared to be more important than language proficiency for some students. I will return to this in the next chapter.

Li et al. (1997) and Li and Kaye (1998) suggest that poor English language skills cause international students to feel depressed and homesick, and I do not disagree with their finding. However, this interrelationship was not found in this study. Homesickness appeared to be related to the close relationship between women students and their parents (see 6.6 for further discussion). The lack of interconnection was probably due to the number of respondents who mentioned their lack of language proficiency but whose problem was actually not 'poor' English, but an 'infinite desire to improve their English. Their English was not as poor as that of those who became homesick because of their poor English. Similarly, while Li et al. (1997) and Li and Kaye (1998) report there is a significant interrelationship between language proficiency and academic progress, only 2 out of 21 of my respondents who referred to their lack of language proficiency mentioned in relation to academic progress. The difference may be due to the different research methods we used - questionnaires as opposed to interviews - and also to differences in basic language proficiency between their informants and mine.

It also became clear that many of my informants were particularly disappointed by their slow progress in oral English. However, the questionnaire revealed that both women and men communicated most with their own nationality. They had little exposure to situations which required them to speak English, so their lack of progress was, in a way, a natural outcome. An apparently rather different study, by Abdalla and Gibson (1984), which indicated there was no relationship between the length of study and the change of attitudes towards the role of women in the workplace among 100 Libyan women who stayed in the US for more than four years, seems to share some commonality with this finding. Both change in one's social attitude and one's improvement in the language of destination is not so much related to the length of stay in a foreign country, as to whom one associates with.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> In this connection, the average length of stay of women in this study was 32 months, in comparison with men's 29 months (see Appendix III-1 for further information.)

More women than men mentioned issues related to the living environment, especially in relation to loneliness and the Japanese community, although individual issues did not indicate either commonality to both genders or difference between them. On the one hand, Japanese students spent a considerable amount of time with Japanese people so as to enjoy themselves and to have company, at the cost of little progress in their oral English. On the other hand, they were sometimes uncertain about being with other Japanese when they were aware of both the cost in terms of language they were paying, and when they had to follow implicit rules of socialisation.

In addition, the relationship between issues to do with the living environment and the amount of contact time per day suggests different kinds of problem depending on accommodation types. Students who live in private accommodation are more likely to suffer loneliness and the lack of opportunity to practise oral English. Those who live in college accommodation, however, tend to face the demands of socialisation with other students, particularly other Japanese, and also a reduced time to practise oral English if Japanese students live in the same accommodation.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Two points have become clear in this study so far: first, there were more mentions of issues by women than men; and second, there were commonalities to both genders, differences between the two, and differences within each gender. This chapter has concentrated on investigating Japanese postgraduate students' concerns in their educational life during the period of their studying abroad. Three areas concerned students particularly: courses, language, and their living environment. Lack of language proficiency was the most common anxiety for many students, regardless of gender and level of study. Although there were several possible reasons for this, the one which became clear in this study was that their endless desire to improve their English depressed many students. However, at the same time, it also became apparent that Japanese students spent most of their time with people from their own nation. Considering that few students in this study complained about the lack of opportunity to mix with local students, which has often been found to be a common issue for international students (Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Mullins et al., 1995; Li et al., 1997), the



conclusion must be that they neglect to make efforts to fulfil their desire to improve their English, although it is unlikely that this desire would be fully met because of its open-endedness. It is therefore essential for Japanese students to be aware of the discrepancy between what they want and what they themselves do, and it would help if academic staff pointed out the discrepancy.

As to issues related to courses, lack of confidence was an issue for both women and men, but especially for women MA students. Although a woman's lack of confidence is a frequently discussed issue among feminists, there seem to be few opportunities provided for these students to overcome the problem while studying abroad. In addition, since many Japanese women students enrol on MA courses on a full-time basis, they have to adjust to a new environment quickly and cope with the demands of the work to complete their study within a year. They are disadvantaged in comparison with many other international students because they are accustomed to Japanese university life, where memory-oriented and lecturer-oriented education is common, and little independent work is required. This makes it difficult for them to envisage the demands of work in foreign postgraduate schools. It is therefore essential that Japanese students and academic staff in the UK recognise the differences in learning styles and workloads, and that lecturers encourage these students to cope with these differences (Aboutorabi, 1995: 59). For example, it is helpful if academic staff keep reminding international students, especially Japanese women students, to submit their course-work on time so that they can avoid panicking at the end of the course and losing confidence in their proficiency completely.

Regarding issues related to the living environment, it became clear that for some Japanese students there was a dilemma between their desires to communicate with their own compatriots and their desire to keep some distance from them. Considering their tendency to communicate with the same compatriots at the cost of time they could be practising their English, they should prioritise the opportunity to improve their English. Some universities, like the International Christian University in Tokyo, encourage their students to understand foreign culture and gain international competence by providing college accommodation where balanced numbers of local and international students can share accommodation facilities.<sup>70</sup> Both local and international students in the UK might

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<sup>70</sup> There are universities like Kansai Gaidai University in Osaka, Japan, which actively arrange residence in homes for their international students, although the service is often limited to those on undergraduate

welcome such arrangements.

Finally, little interrelationship between lack of language proficiency and homesickness was found. Instead a close relationship with parents was linked with homesickness. This shows the danger of ignoring issues in students' personal life, as studies of international students have tended to do. Students' personal life and educational life are interrelated. Seeking interrelationships between issues experienced by students in their educational life only misses out the relationship of these issues with those encountered in their personal life. It is therefore important to see international students' life as a whole.

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level exchange programmes.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Issues in personal life while studying abroad**

Abouttrabi (1995: 57) states that 'some supervisors see their roles only in connection with academic work and do not show any interest in the life and welfare of their students'. The tendency to focus only on the educational life of international students is also widely seen in academic studies. The exceptions to this rule have often been feminists and then limited to mature women students, usually married women or single mothers studying part-time in their home country (see, for example, Edwards, 1975; Edward, 1993; Pascall and Cox; 1993; Merrill, 1999). The issues discussed are therefore often limited to how such women make study compatible with their work, housework and child-care. Much in the personal lives of students, especially international students remains a blind spot, even though they interact with and may hinder their study.

#### **6.1 Overview of issues while studying abroad**

First, I shall review the frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues in their personal life while studying abroad.

The following Table 6-1 shows the total number of mentions made by women and men was 118, but the number made by women was much larger than that by men, an average of 3.0: 1.6. This suggests more women than men experience issues in relation to their personal life as well as their educational life and more women than men were open to reveal their issues (see also Section 5.1).

Of the three women and eight men who made no comments which could be categorised as issues in this area, many were single, in their early 20s to early 30s, and tended to be career-minded, across both genders. Two women appeared to be extremely interested in working after completing their courses, although they also implied the possibility of becoming housewives. The eight men all appeared to be career-minded, with no doubts, confident in themselves, taking a 'carefree' attitude, and/or prepared to

let personal matters take their own course.

**Table 6-1 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues in personal life**

Area*	Women		Men		Total	
	No. of mentions**	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents
<b>(1) Finance</b>	20	14	22	14	42	28
<b>(2) Marriage</b>	17	10	9	7	26	17
<b>(3) Pressure from or towards other people</b>	10	9	5	5	15	14
<b>(4) Emotional insecurity</b>	9	5	5	3	14	8
<b>(5) Relationships with parents</b>	9	7	0	0	9	7
<b>(6) 'Other'</b>	9	6	3	3	12	9
<b>Sub total</b>	74	22	44	19	118	41
<b>No issues mentioned in personal life</b>	-	3	-	8	-	11
<b>N</b>	-	25	-	27	-	52

For notes \* and \*\*, See p. 86.

All mentions relating to personal life were classified into six areas, in accordance with the content of the mentions. The number of mentions made by women was higher in all areas, except in one, finance, which had slightly more mentions from men than women. Next, I shall examine carefully and qualitatively the data presented in the table.

## 6.2 Issues related to finance

The area in which mentions were concentrated most was finance, as is common to findings about international students in other countries such as Japan or Australia

(Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Burns, 1991; Mullins et al., 1995). Many people who believe that Japanese students, particularly those who live an urban life in London, must be rich because of their strong yen based on a developed economy, may be surprised to know that Japanese students also experience financial issues. However, these were more likely to be psychological issues associated with money than material issues, for instance, not having enough money.<sup>71</sup>

**Table 6-2 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to finance**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(1) Finance	Feel guilty towards my parents or spouse providing financial support	9	3	12
	Asked to return to Japan by my parents or relatives for financial reasons	3	1	4
	Feel inferiority towards my friends of my generation who earn money	2	7	9
	Feel guilty because studying abroad is a luxury	2	1	3
	Feel disconnected because of not working	1	6	7
	Worried about how much I have got	1	2	3
	It is time to work at my age	1	2	3
	My activity is restricted because of a limited monthly allowance	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	20	22	42
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	14	14	28
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	11	13	24
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several issues.

There are four noteworthy points. Firstly, more than half the women and men respondents referred to issues to do with the finance. When respondents with financial support from their employers are excluded because none of them mentioned issues in

<sup>71</sup> The reason I deal with these issues in this chapter is because I regard them as more personal than educational, from the content of participants' comments, as seen in Table 6-2.

relations to finance, 58% (14 out of 24) of self-funded women and 78% (14 out of 18) of self-funded men suffered from issues over finance. Although the mentions varied, including both material and psychological concerns, it is obvious that financial issues were serious for many students of both genders. The number of mentions on issues to do with finance was indeed larger than that on courses, which scored the highest among educational issues, across both genders (see Table 5-2). Thirdly, both women and men's mentions were concentrated on certain issues, with a more diverse range of issues each receiving only a few mentions. Fourthly, those students who did not mention any issues in this area were obviously those who did not owe anything to their parents financially in the case of women, and were those who did not owe anything their parents *and* also had secure jobs, i.e. those sponsored by their employers, in the case of men.

In the case of women, the mentions were concentrated on relations with parents or spouses who were providing financial support. Nine women exhibited a sense of guilt towards their parents or spouses who were supporting them financially: eight towards their parents and one towards her husband. Many of them appeared to be suffering seriously from this guilt, mentioning it several times as a response to different questions and/or exhibiting their depression plainly in their face and/or the tone of their voices: an indication of how strong their sense of guilt was towards their parents or spouse. For example, W21, who graduated from a junior college in Tokyo, did a BA course at a British university, and was on an MA course with full financial support from her parents, commented:

*I feel ashamed. Well, the biggest reason is that I feel sorry for my parents. In the matter of finance... How can I describe... They are never tight with their money, but when I think about my position about depending on my parents and that my father is retiring soon, I extremely feel sorry for them.*

[W21, single, early 20s, MA in Legal & Political Theory, full-time]

The next example, W14, came to London with her parents when her father was transferred to the London branch of his firm two and a half years ago. She had left her clerical work at a transportation company with whom she had worked for three years since she graduated from her university. The reason she gave for leaving the job was

that she had been interested in studying abroad and decided to use the chance to come to the UK with her parents.<sup>72</sup> She was entirely dependent on her parents financially.

*It is never easy for me to study in a foreign country, but being a student, I have an objective to achieve. But at the same time, I wonder if I am right to try to pursue what I want with my parents' money. In a way, it's a sense of guilt.*

[W14, single, late 20s, MPhil/PhD in Japanese Linguistics, full-time]

W9 originally came to London to accompany her husband, whose bank transferred him to its London branch more than four years earlier. She was paying half the tuition fees from her part-time work as a teacher of Japanese and the other half through the support of her husband.

W9: *I feel a little guilty towards my husband.*

Nishio: Guilt?

W9: *Yes, in a way I'm freely allowed to do whatever I want by my husband, although he says I don't have to feel guilt. I mean I sometimes feel guilt [but not often]. Well, despite the fact that I'm allowed to do whatever I want to do by my husband, and he pays half the tuition fees, I don't do the housework as much as I used to do, and shout at him if he makes a noise. I feel guilt because I'm allowed to be selfish and do something luxurious.*

[W9, married, late 30s, MA in Applied Linguistics, part-time]

Interestingly, as her comment above shows, W9 also felt guilty because she thought she had not adequately fulfilled her domestic work and duties.<sup>73</sup>

As shown here, most of the women who evinced a sense of guilt towards their parents or spouse were fully supported financially, and a few were partly supported; and a high proportion of women (47%: 9 out of 19 women) who received financial support from their parents or spouse mentioned a sense of guilt (see Section 2-7 in Appendix III-1 for more detail). All these women had to negotiate dilemmas between their interest in studying and a sense of guilt. Furthermore, the interesting commonality seen

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<sup>72</sup> What is interesting as to her decision is that she might have been able to do so without much criticism, because of being a woman. See Section 7.7 for further discussion on this issue.

<sup>73</sup> See Pascall and Cox (1993), Bhalalusesa (1998), Brina et al. (1999) and Leonard (2001) for more

among these women was that no one had had complaints about money from their parents or spouse who had offered financial help. In other words, their parents or spouse never pressurised any of these women to earn money or to refund the money which they had been given, which is strongly related to the discussion on relationships between parents and children in Japan (see Section 2.3.3).

In contrast with these women, *none* of the three women who made mentions classified as 'Asked to return to Japan by my parents or relatives for financial reasons' mentioned any sense of guilt towards their parents, even though two out of the three women had also received financial help from their parents. The difference seen in the two groups suggests that the former group of women students suffered from a sense of guilt towards their parents or spouse, because their parents and spouse were 'so supportive', while the latter group did not, because their parents were those who sometimes 'irritated' them by pushing them to return to Japan.

The relationship between the parents or husband and the women students in the former group appears to be 'full of love', and profound because of their deep concern for each other. Neither the parents nor the husband expect return - i.e. money - from their daughters or wife. Perhaps they were happy with their daughters' good academic performance or the wife's lively attitude (see Section 6.3 for further discussion), or parents may have wanted to protect their daughters from the risk of corruption due to the need for money.<sup>74</sup> However, at the same time, they may also have a profoundly felt expectation of an emotional return from their daughters or wife: providing them with grandchildren, caring for them when they get old, and preparing cooked meals. The recent popularity of having daughters, not sons, among parents in Japan can be seen as an expression of this tendency, and in relation to this point, there are feminists who consider that parents see the cost of securing peace of mind when they get old as included in the cost of bringing up their children (Ogura, 1994: 181; Ueno, 1994: 20). Husbands who financially support their wives in doing what they want like - W9's husband - may also be hoping that their wives will reciprocate with care towards them

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discussion on women's struggles to make their career compatible with their domestic work.

<sup>74</sup> Habu (2000: 54, 63) remarks that restaurant work is a financial source for Japanese students while studying abroad but is sometimes avoided by them, especially by women, because of the negative image it holds; restaurant work is considered as a part of *mizu shobai* which is viewed as 'business with uncertain prospects, providing unstable work and variable earnings'. It can also be associated with the sex industry.

Kudo (1989: 113) also describes her experience of being asked by mothers and acquaintances of young



or their parents in the future. Daughters or wives with such parents or husbands appeared to have been brought up to be able to sense their undefined and unspoken expectation. This led to a sense of guilt or indebtedness because they could not yet meet these expectations, but nevertheless were continuing to receive 'love' from their parents or husband unilaterally. Moreover, the uncertain extent of parents' expectations may cause these daughters to be in constant doubt about their ability to meet their obligations to them.

Nine women mentioned this issue, and the number was the second largest for an individual issue, following 11 women and ten men who referred to lack of language proficiency in educational life (see Section 5.4). A sense of guilt towards their parents or spouse offering financial support for their studying abroad was a common issue for women, but has not been detected or discussed in the existing literature.

In comparison with the 47% of women who showed a sense of guilt towards their parents or spouse, 27% (three out of the total of 11 men) who were financially supported by their parents mentioned such a sense. Many men who did not mention it seemed to regard financial support from their parents as something they could repay through their work in the future (if this was wanted or if they were asked to do so), unlike many of the women who were not sure about this: no women mentioned that they 'borrowed' money from parents, which suggested that few of them saw money as something they should return in the future. The tendency was clearly described by a man's comment, 'I borrow money from my parents now, but what I should do in the future is to return the money, that's all'. The gender difference suggests that men have a stronger sense of their duty as men to look for a job, and are more confident and/or interested in working than women after they complete their courses; also, men do not have to be as particular about providing emotional care with their parents as women are, because there is more possibility for them than for women to provide financial support for their parents.

Interestingly, most of the women and all of the men who referred to their sense of guilt also mentioned their own (differing) ways of coping with this. Women tended to hope to return to Japan and live near or with their parents when they completed their courses in order to make their parents and themselves happy. Regarding life in the

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Japanese women to watch their daughters' behaviour during their stay in Canada.

'empty nest', or the post-parental family, Schaie and Willis (1996: 157) state that 'children worried mostly about the mother, especially homemakers who had defined their own identity in terms of their children'. In relation to Schaie and Willis's comment, all six women who hoped to go back to their parents had housewife mothers who might have defied their identity in terms of their children more strongly than working mothers.

In contrast, the men wished to complete their courses as soon as possible and to find decent jobs so as to lighten the burden on their parents or to enable their parents to save face. The sense of responsibility to make their own living (as men) certainly pushes them to get a job, and this interacts with their other need to reduce the burden on their parents.

The gender difference might be linked to some other factors. For example, firstly, some of the women might have chosen their subjects because of their intrinsic interest rather than usefulness in the labour market (see Section 2.5.4 for further discussion). These women were likely to be 'less concerned with making money' and 'more motivated by non-economic goals' than men (Leckey et al., 1995: 59, 64; Leonard, 1998b: 28). Secondly, women who mentioned their sense of guilt towards their parents were all single, and many of them were concerned about marriage. This means that they were likely to marry and have children sooner or later, which could dampen their interest in looking for a job (Stolte-Heiskanen, 1991), and in career continuity (Islam, 1997: 155). They might have also been aware that they would not be heavily criticised, even if they decided to marry without making use of their experience of study abroad in a career. These factors, and their unselfish interest in living near or with their parents, might have interacted each other and pushed women to take an 'easy' option.

In contrast, mentions by men converged on the feelings of inferiority towards their friends of their own generation who were earning money and, of insecurity through not working, while there were few mentions of other issues.

Seven men mentioned the feeling of inferiority towards their friends of their own generation who earned money. Most of the seven had full or partial financial support from their parents or relatives, and the rest were fully funding themselves from their own savings. There was no significant difference among these men by the type financial support. M57, for example, was paying the cost of studying abroad from his savings as well as receiving financial support from his aunt, who was single and a

teacher, and showed her deep understanding of his study, unlike his mother who was a divorced piano teacher and wanted her son to earn money to help her family, instead of studying abroad.

*Well, I fret about not working, because most of my friends have their own families, and have achieved certain positions at their workplaces. In comparison, I'm a student and I don't even have my own family. In that respect, I'm in a hurry. But at the same time, I feel I'm lucky because I can now see a different world from what I've known. I can satisfy myself by thinking that it is better to see there are so many things happening and so many ways of living in the world other than living my life in a small world.*

[M57, single, early 20s, MA in Learning and Teaching of English, full-time]

One of the reasons why M57 decided to study abroad in spite of his mother's opposition was that he wanted to be better qualified as a teacher of English, which was his second occupation. He had left his former occupation as a graphic designer at an advertising company as a result of becoming seriously ill due to the excessive work he had to accept. What was interesting about M57, though, was that despite having a convincing reason for his studying abroad himself, he still suffered from the sense of being 'outstripped' by his friends. This suggests that the social norm can be deeply internalised within oneself, and this sometimes causes a dilemma within the student even if he/she does not intentionally aspire to conformity.

Another example is M51. He was paying the cost of studying abroad from his savings from his previous work as a writer in the fashion industry.

*I'm old enough [to work full-time]. I wonder if I'm right to be a student at my age. I mean, my friends have been working very hard and follow their companies' policies, although I'm a little sceptical about that point. They have their objectives such as being a section manager or a department manager, but I don't have such desires. The reasons I came to the UK is that I wasn't interested in such a life, and wanted to do something in order to be a writer in the future. I'm in a hurry to take a step forward. If I were 25 or so, I could have enjoyed my student life, but when I think about my age, I cannot relax.*

[M51, single, early 30s, MA in Contemporary Cultural Process (Sociology), full-time]

It was clear that all of those who referred to feeling inferior to their friends who earned money thought that being financially independent was important. As will be discussed later (see Section 8.3), becoming financially independent is often more important than getting married for men students.

Moreover, although there was a clear difference in the number of mentions between the women and men who referred to this sense of inferiority, there were some commonality across both genders. Most of those who mentioned inferiority were in their late 20s or early 30s, and the friends to whom they felt inferior appeared to be of the same age. Thus, the majority of their friends of the same age are considered as confirming 'norms', and 'age' was therefore also a concern in relation to their financial capacity.<sup>75</sup>

Six men made mentions, which could be classified as 'Feel disconnected because of not working'. All six expressed their feelings that they had not done what they were supposed to be doing - i.e. working - but were leading a peculiar or deviant life as students. Their attitudes towards and thoughts about work indicate their belief that it was 'natural' that they should be working now. They often relates to their sense of shame as a man (Nakamura, T., 2000: 100), although, at the same time, the shame worked as a strong drive to look for a job if necessary and work after completing their courses.

M38 is an example of those who used to work but decided to study abroad. He used to work for an art gallery in Tokyo, but left to take an MA course in London.

Although it was for a short while, I have experience of working. So I know how hard the business is. Well, there was a time when I wasn't successful in selling paintings, so I have known hardship. In contrast, we don't face that kind of hardship, being students. Students are just students. No one has to worry if she or he can survive tomorrow, being a student. *So it's easy for me to be a student, which sometimes makes me feel guilty. (...) I feel I'm avoiding hardship, and I'm not satisfied with the situation.*

[M38, single, early 30s, MA in Fine Art Administration and Curatorship, full-time]

The next man is an example of those who were sponsored by their employers.

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<sup>75</sup> Two men, including M51, 'clearly' emphasised this worry in relation to age and, they are therefore

M34 was an employee of one of the major insurance companies in Japan, and had worked for the company for nine years ever since he graduated from his university.

*I'm relaxed and thankful [with my employer for sending me here]. I'm free from any responsibility. (...) But I feel I'll be spoilt if I continue this life, I think I must work. I don't think that I want to work as soon as possible, but I think I'll be ruined if I continue this life. (laughs)*

[M34, single, early 30s, MA in Industrial Relations and Personal Management, full-time]

It is remarkable that M34 felt disconnected because of only one year's absence from his office. This suggests the strong influence of the expectations about how to become a man - man can attain manhood only through working (full-time) - he had learned since he was a boy (Connell, 1987; Connell, 1995; Ito, 1996).

Furthermore, M34's comment implies the reason why study abroad would never become as popular among men as among women. The reason is strongly associated with the system of the labour market in Japan. The situation has been changing dramatically due to the recent economic crisis which has destroyed the myth that Japanese companies seldom make their employees redundant and are therefore safe (Kobayashi, 2001). However, it is still often the case that the only chance for people to join a large and prestigious Japanese company is at the time when they graduate from their universities, because many of these enterprises employ new graduates only (see also Section 2.3.1). Thus, many men (and women) try to make full use of this opportunity, and once they enter these companies, they often hope to stay until retirement, since leaving such companies often means working for smaller ones. Working for a smaller company often means a drop in salary as well as in social status, which M34 was, indeed, most afraid of. If employees want to advance their career through study abroad, they need to take this risk.

There is, of course, a possibility that they will find work with foreign companies. These have grown more popular among young Japanese people recently (Thomas, 1993: 54), firstly because of the collapse of myth that Japanese companies guarantee life-long employment, and secondly because of employees' hope for a favourable assessment based on not seniority but ability (Dore, 1998: 781). However, these companies are

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categorised under the issue 'At my age, it is time to work', too.

often extremely competitive and difficult to enter because of the high entry requirements, for example, specialised skills and knowledge and language proficiency. As a result, many men stay in the company they entered after graduation. This lack of mobility among workers promotes the negative image of men who leave their workplaces as 'dropouts', regardless of whether or not they intentionally leave their workplaces to advance their career.<sup>76</sup>

Like M38 and M34, five out of the six men had had experience of working before they came to the UK. In this respect, it might be possible to judge that students who have worked before tend to suffer from the sense of being disconnected because of not working more than those who have not. Their temporary loss of status might be strongly related to this sense, when it is considered that few students who have never worked mentioned it.

In contrast, only one woman mentioned a sense of being disconnected because of not working: she also had experience of working prior to her studying abroad.

### **6.3 Issues related to marriage**

There were 22 single women, 3 married women, 16 single men, and 11 married men in this study;<sup>77</sup> it was the single women who most mentioned issues relating to marriage. There were two reasons: first because the absolute number of single women was largest; and second they were eager to get married before it was 'too late' (Bhalalusesa, 1998: 32) and this anxiety resulted in the large number mentions. Most were around the age of 30.

In this section, I shall make a close examination of commonalities to both genders and differences between genders as well as within each gender, in relation to marriage.

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<sup>76</sup> Allen et al. (1990: 81) state that most of their research participants, graduates of the University of Bradford, 'spent two to three years in their first job', and show their surprise at finding a number of other participants were 'still employed with the company or organisation where they obtained their first appointment'. However, the number they show appeared to be extremely small to me as a Japanese.

<sup>77</sup> I did not ask any of the participants about their sexuality, but I had heard from his woman acquaintance who also participated in this research before I met him that a man participant might be homosexual. During the interview with me, he did not mention his sexuality, and I did not ask him about it either, because I thought the issue was too private to ask about with a person I met for the first time. As to marriage, he did not show any interest, but many other single men did not, either. There was therefore no evidence to distinguish his sexuality.

**Table 6-3 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to marriage**

Area	Issue		No. of respondents mentioning the issues		Total	
			Women	Men		
(2) Marriage	Single	Concerned about not being married	6	1	7	
		Feel inferiority towards my friends of my generation who are married (with children)	4	1	5	
		Regret for my decision not to have children	1	0	1	
		At a disadvantage with arranged meetings for marriage because of my strong academic background	1	0	1	
		My girlfriend is asking me to marry her	0	1	1	
	Married	Because of being accompanied by my family, my activity is restricted and/or feel responsibility towards my family	0	4	4	
		Afraid of destroying my family by being independent	1	0	1	
		Do not get along with my wife	0	1	1	
	Single & Married*	Interference by relatives, siblings and/or others	4	1	5	
	Total no. of mentions**		17	9	26	
	Total no. of respondents		Single	8	3	11
			Married	2	4	6
	Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area		Single	14	13	27
			Married	1	7	8
	N			25	27	52

\* The respondents were three single women, one married woman, and one single man.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several issues

The total number of mentions made by women was nearly twice that of men. Four issues in Table 6-3 - 'Concerned about not being married', 'Feel inferiority towards my friends of my generation who are married (with children)', 'Interference by relatives, siblings and/or others', and 'Because of being accompanied by my family, my activity is restricted and/or feel responsibility towards my family' - implied differences between women and men. The first three are overwhelmingly mentioned by women, and the last

by only men.

Few single men appeared to be interested in marriage, saying 'I'm not ready to think about marriage' or 'I can't think about marriage yet'. They appeared to see marriage as something which would follow starting a career, and something that could not be attained without a career (Ehara 1988, 179; Schaie and Willis 1996, 138-139).<sup>78</sup> Some of those men might have been aware that women value a man's economic power when they look for men for marriage. Unlike women, men are fortunate enough not to have to worry about their age very much. They are likely to be accepted by women as their spouses even when relatively old (as long as they have adequate financial capacity), whereas women's appearance is seen as important for marriage, and in the matter of health, they must take their age into account when giving birth (Nishio, 1995; Yuzuki, 1999: 279).

Nearly half of the single women showed deep concern about marriage, and almost all of these were aged about 30. The other single women seemed to let the matter take its own course, or to hope to get a job (before getting married). They were interested in marriage, but not so worried as the others. The latter women were often in their early to middle 20s, or over 40, or divorced. That is to say, they were not quite at the right time to be concerned about marriage, or had already experienced married life. Some were similar to many men, in that they were not ready to think about marriage, just like all the single men, although it is unlikely that they saw marriage as something which they could not attain without a job, as did the men. They were concerned with fulfilling their own interests by studying hard or getting a job. This suggests that marriage was an extremely serious issue for some women, while not other women and certainly not for single men.

Six women mentioned their concern about not being married, and some of these referred to their feeling of inferiority towards their friends of their generation who were married (with children). This indicates that single women tended to regard what their friends of their generation did as the 'norm', and saw themselves as somehow 'deviant' or 'left behind'. This was similar to the tendency, which some men presented such as

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<sup>78</sup> Hogan and Mochizui (1988 cited in Schaie and Willis, 1996: 33) report on the findings of research on patterns of schooling, work, and marriage for cohorts of American and Japanese men. They say that in Japan, recent 'delaying school completion resulted in delayed entry into the labour force and delayed marriage, while in the US the prolongation of schooling resulted in more men beginning full-time work and/or marrying while still in school'.



feelings of inferiority to their friends who were earning good money (see Section 6.2). The tendency seems to be strongly connected to the statement made by Schaie and Willis, '[t]he marriage decision may [also] be influenced by the fact that most of one's peers already have married' (Schaie and Willis, 1996: 137). W10 described her feeling of insecurity as follows:

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However, later in the interview, W10 said that the pressure she felt about marriage and her family had reduced over several months.

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What is interesting is that she implied her concern about marriage in the previous comment 'in present tense', although she had freed herself from the concern several months earlier. There were a few other women who referred to their emotional changes while studying abroad.

The next example, W16, was one of a few women who encountered parental opposition to her studying abroad - they see music as 'a gamble' - as well as one who

was keen on establishing her career. She appeared to be actively promoting herself as an opera singer in the making, by participating in auditions and giving small solo concerts in the UK. However, at the same time, she was worried about being single at her age.

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The contradiction between her efforts to be successful in her career and her comment implies the possibility that women's 'need' to get married for their own comfort hinders their career achievement, and that the increase in the number of women who go on to higher education does not necessarily correlate with increase in the number of women in employment or with an interest in further career development (Amano, 1986b: 12; Oakley, 1990: 76; Ueno, 1994: 51; Islam, 1997: 165).<sup>79</sup>

In addition to the tendency that the group of single women who cared about marriage compared themselves with their friends who had already got married, there is another tendency found among these women: they were also concerned about their age in relation to marriage. These two tendencies interact, as is clear from the accounts already cited. W10 was 29 but would soon be 30, and W16 was also 29 when the interviews were held. Interestingly, women who expressed their concern about not being married were all aged from 29 to 32.

Generally speaking, it is undeniable that as they get to 30, most of their friends of the same age are married, which makes these women feel left behind. It is common for single women to rush to get married at 29 years old, as W10 implied. There is a coined word, *kotobukibinbo*, which means being poor because of spending money to celebrate someone's marriage in Japan, and it seems that many women aged 29 years old are in

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<sup>79</sup> As touched in Section 2.3.2, Ueno (1990: 237) states that 'the marriage-rate (in Japan) is very high in comparison with European countries where "the dismantling of the family" is in process, and that Japanese people are those who love getting married'. However, at the same time, a number of young Japanese women today see marriage as the cause of a decline in their standard of living and taking care of a nuisance, a man who does no housework (see Section 2.3.2; Yamada, 1999: 74, 76; Inubushi et al., 2000: 13-14).

this situation, just as they themselves put their friends in it. Moreover, when women reach their 30 or over, they may increasingly seek 'a sense of security' in marriage: reaching this age often makes them seriously question their interest in continuing their jobs, especially if the job is unlikely to offer a chance for promotion,<sup>80</sup> or their wish to live as a single woman (Ogasawara, 1998: 52).

The tendency to regard 'before or around 30 years old' as the vital age for getting married was also seen in both of the single women who were in their early 20s. For example, W23, one of the two women in their early 20s, said:

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There was a time when young women were compared to a Christmas cake - women who were 25 and under sold well in the marriage market but those who were over 26 had little chance of selling - and pushed to get married before it became too late. Therefore it is not surprising that single women in this study were nervous about reaching the age of 30: there is the same logic here. Rather, what is a matter of concern is the revival of the popularity of being a housewife among highly educated women in Japan (Ueno, 1994: 56; Sodei, 1996: 164; Yamada, 1999), and some women who showed their concern about marriage in this study also indicated their interest in being a housewife in the future (see Section 8.3 for more discussion).

In contrast with these women, only one man (M34) out of 16 single men referred to his worry about not yet being married. He mentioned both his concern about not being married and his feeling of inferiority towards friends of his generation who were married (with children). He was an MSc student in his early 30s, with financial support from his employer. When it was considered that all the other men over 30 in this study with financial support from their employers were married, he was indeed an exception. There seems to be a tendency that single men over 30 who have had a steady job for some years are expected to marry in Japanese society, which clearly corresponds with the social norm that men are those who support their families (Nakamura, T., 2000: 99).

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<sup>80</sup> See also Islam (1997) in which the working condition Japanese women are in is well explained.

He also added, 'I have few single friends left. I don't want to be seen as eccentric by other people, remaining single', reflecting the common assumption that people who have reached a certain age but have not married yet may have some problems (Guggenbuhl-Craig, 1982: 63). Those who remain single like M34, become sensitive to this, and afraid of being ridiculed. As Oakley (1990: 85) points out, 'ridicule is one of the most effective means there is of expressing social disapproval', and is a strong pressure to do what is considered normal in the society.

Four women (three single and one married) made mentions categorised under 'Interference from relatives, siblings and/or others', and three of them (two single women and one married woman) were extremely annoyed by this interference. In contrast, although there was a man who mentioned 'Interference from relatives, siblings and/or others', he seemed to care little.

There is a general view that how much interference one gets and whether or not one is sensitive to it depends on where one lives, and it is generally concluded that those who live in a bigger city have less interference than those who live in a small town. In this research, half of the total number of single women came from big cities - for example, Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama - and the other half were from either middle or small-sized towns. Three out of the four women who mentioned interference from other people were either from Tokyo, the capital, or Osaka, the second biggest city. The general view is therefore not quite applicable in this research. W10, who came from Tokyo, stated:

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[W10, single, late 20s, MPhil/PhD in Japanese Linguistics, full-time]

As W10 states, it is often the case that relatives, neighbours or other acquaintances interfere in personal matters (Ogura, 1994: 180; Yamada, 1999: 68), even though one's family is understanding. A woman student in Habu's study on Japanese women in British higher education describes the situation well, saying that '... in Japan we always have to be involved with neighbours and collective actions' (Habu, 2000: 56).

Another single woman, W1, in her early 30s, who came from Osaka, was exasperated by her elder brother who kept urging her to get married because he believed that beauty and youth were both important for women to attract men. A married woman in her early 30s, who came from Tokyo, was shocked when her kindergarten teacher whom the woman still had contact with, advised her that she should have a baby at her age.

At the same time, there was also a distinctive comment by W13, who came from Yokkaichi, a middle-sized industrial town in the middle of Japan. She stated that:

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[W13, single, late 20s, MSc in Criminology, full-time]

This comment would suggest at first that she was bothered by the interference from people around her, but there was an impression from her facial expression, tone of voice and laugh that she was actually enjoying this interference over marriage from them. In other words, she seemed to be only pretending that she was tired of it. W13 indeed showed her interest in marriage throughout the interview, frequently making comments on it.

Moreover, it is clear from her comment that this advice from other people around her did make sense to her. Although among these four women she was the only one who accepted such interference, it is important to note that like her, two single women also showed total understanding towards their parents who were worried about their marriage and verbally expressed their thoughts. W8 in her early 20s commented:

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[W8, single, early 20s, MA in Women's Studies and Education, full-time]

'For me' in her comment implies that she actually appreciates her parents' concerns about her marriage. Another woman, divorced in her early 40s, said that she was thankful for her parents who hoped that their daughter would remarry but, at the same

time, tried to understand what she wanted to do. Both seemed to maintain good relations with their parents, who respected their daughters' interests in studying, yet also worried about their marriages.

There are two points to be clarified here in relation to interference from other people on marriage. One is that regardless of whether these women hated or appreciated this interference, more women than men tend to face it. The other is that some women tried to follow the advice on marriage given by other people, because they did not disagree with the social belief that seeking primal happiness in marriage was sensible for women (Ogura, 1994: 170). 'Happiness' seems to have two meanings for women, though. The first is to be with someone she loves (and have a baby with him). The other is to secure a position, for example, to obtain 'financial stability' (see, for example, W22 on p. 215). As discussed in Section 2.3.2, obtaining social respectability might be added, too, although this is important for both women and men. The tendency of Japanese women to think that obtaining financial stability through marriage is important is evinced by their high marriage-rate, in spite of the high rate of young women who think 'women do not have to marry if they can be financially independent' (Ehara, 1988: 176; Ochiai, 1994). As for the respectability which can be gained through marriage, there is a strong opinion that women who are not married are 'unhappy' (Johnson, 1990: 131), and those who are employed and single at advanced ages are also seen as obstinate and aggressive (Sharpe, 1976: 136-7).<sup>81</sup>

Nine out of 11 married men in this study were accompanied by their families, and four of them made mentions categorised as 'Because of being accompanied by my family, my activity is restricted and/or feel responsibility towards my family'. All of these men were married *with children*. M42 was a married man in his late 20s, with a baby aged seven months. He was reading for an MBA, with financial support from his employer, one of the major banks in Japan.

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<sup>81</sup> The words, *urenokori* (left behind), *ikiokure* (late to get married), *ikazugoke* (failure to get married), and *old Miss*, are those to look down upon these women in Japan. There is, however, no equivalent word

[M42, married with a child, late 20s, MBA, full-time]

Early in the interview, he had mentioned that his wife was a keen learner of English and was therefore delighted when he was entitled to study abroad with financial support from his employer. However, he always felt sorry for his wife, who could not go to a language school as much as she wanted - only three evenings per week - because she had to be looking after their baby while he was busy with his studies.<sup>82</sup>

The reason why only men mentioned this issue was strongly related to the fact that no women had brought their own families with them. Rather it was always the women who had accompanied their spouses and then decided to make use of the opportunity to study, but within the limitations of being as someone accompanying her spouse (Verthelyi, 1995: 391); women play a secondary role here, too.

The difference in the number of mentions between women and men is situational, because of the difference in the number of students who brought their spouses between men and women. However, it is still interesting to note that this issue is one of a few which had more mentions made by men than by women regarding issues while studying abroad.

Nevertheless, at the same time, five out of the nine married men who were accompanied by their family did not mention their sense of either restriction or responsibility: all but one were married *with no children*. According to them, their wives seem to be enjoying their free time through going to language schools or being temporary researchers while their husbands were studying. The difference seen in these two kinds of men suggests that whether or not they had children in London strongly affected their emotional state; if they had children, their wives had to spend most of their time taking care of their children while their husbands were studying, which compelled those husbands to feel sorry for their wives. If the men did not have any children, wives could utilise their free time more while their husbands were busy with their studies, freeing the husbands from a sense of guilt.

Focusing on the wives' side, during my time as a postgraduate student in London, I

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for men who remain single at advanced age.

<sup>82</sup> See Lewins (1990: 92-93) and Verthelyi (1995) for further discussion on the situation of wives who accompanied their husbands for their studies.

have met women students who originally came to London to accompany their husbands, who were transferred to the London offices of their companies. None of them had small children who required much attention. These women were taking postgraduate courses during their husbands' terms of office, normally four years: that is, diploma or MA courses which can be completed in one or two years, but not PhD courses which may take much longer.

As a distinctive feature of these wives, many of them have strong academic and sometimes career backgrounds, like their husbands. In other words, it is often the case that elite men are married to women who have received the same level of education (Ueno, 1994: 89; Mifune, 1996: 151; Schaie and Willis, 1996: 141-142). It is therefore not difficult to find wives with experience of studying abroad when they were younger among those who come to London to accompany their husbands. In this respect, these wives' energy and ability to take postgraduate courses in the UK are sufficient reasons for doing so, regardless of whether or not they have particular plans to utilise in the future the knowledge they obtain. On the one hand, for these elite couples, the important issue appears to be how much wives *enjoy* their lives rather than what they learn through attending courses. On the other hand, there were tacit understandings that wives are allowed to study only during the husbands' postings and to the extent that their study does not adversely affect the harmony of their relationships.<sup>83</sup>

Among participants in this study, two wives had originally come to London to accompany their husbands on business and were taking postgraduate courses. Neither of them had children, and both of them were taking MA courses. As an exceptional case, I have also met at the institution where I study a woman who was the wife of a banker who was transferred to the London branch of his bank, a mother of 5-year-old girl, and a part-time lecturer at a junior college in Tokyo. However, she was not taking a degree course. Instead, she was auditing some classes in her spare time after leaving her daughter at a kindergarten and before collecting her. Considering the situations of these wives generally, it might be too difficult for wives with small children to manage their time and energy so as to take degree courses, unless they have a clear purpose for taking such courses, as well as the understanding of their family members. Where such clarity exists, but not understanding, the women have to be or are ready to pay a price

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<sup>83</sup> Sugawara (1987: 128) discusses the expectation of husbands towards their wives' balance of external work and housework. The same logic applies here.



for doing degree level study. The situation of these wives suggests that women have to prioritise children and family life ahead of their own interest, including the interest in their career (Finch, 1983: 2; Richardson, 1993: 145; Leckey et al., 1995: 64-65; Islam, 1997: 154). There was also a woman in this study who had originally accompanied her husband, who left his workplace and decided to study abroad, and was now taking a PhD course. There was a commonality between her and the other wives referred to earlier, in that they did not have any children, but there was also a difference between them. That is to say, she seemed to be more flexible with her time management than other wives who had to return to Japan once their husbands' postings finished, because her husband, who was also a PhD student, was understanding about her study.

#### **6.4 Issues related to pressure from or towards other people**

Considering issues in educational life which women described (see Chapter 5, and the other areas analysed in this chapter so far), it is clear that more women than men suffer from feelings of inferiority in relation to other people, i.e. from comparing themselves with others. Moreover, more women than men experience interference by other people, especially in relation to marriage, and more women than men experience this as a problem.

This section will examine the tendency of more women than men to be sensitive about what other people think about them, and to see themselves as well as their positions in relation to other people.

The following Table 6-4 shows that the number of mentions made by women was twice that made by men, and was spread across three issues. A close look at these three issues shows that the only one that indicated a difference between women and men was 'Expectations from parents, teachers and/or friends are high'. However, 'Parents, friends and/or acquaintances object to my studying abroad' is noteworthy because of the total number of mentions given by women and men.

Many, both women and men, did not mention any issues to do with pressure from or towards other people. Nevertheless, considering the gender difference that more women than men had financial support from their parents or spouse (see Appendix III-1 for more detail), there seems to be a gender difference in the reasons why they did not

refer to any issues in this area. In the case of women, those who offered financial help were not only financially, but also emotionally supportive of their studies. That is why these women students did not have to suffer from the pressure from others, i.e. their parents or husband. There seems to be the same tendency among men who had financial support from their parents as among women. However, in addition, many men were either sponsored by their employers or funding themselves. That seems to be an equally important reason why men were free from such pressure.

**Table 6-4 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to pressure from or towards other people**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(3) Pressure from or towards other people	Parents, friends and/or acquaintances object to my studying abroad	5	3	8
	Expectations from parents, teachers and/or friends are high	4	0	4
	Feel necessity to repay to my workplace	1	2	3
	Total no. of mentions*	10	5	15
	Total no. of respondents	9	5	14
	Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area	16	22	38
	N	25	27	52

\* Some women respondents mentioned several issues.

The people from whom respondents encountered objections to their study abroad varied in both genders. They include parents, relatives, friends, colleagues at work, neighbours, and people in general. Two women said that many people tended to see people who had studied abroad as having merely had 'fun' in foreign countries, and that this tendency frustrated them. One of the women, W25, said, 'Few Japanese people can distinguish between tourists (who only enjoy themselves in foreign countries) and international postgraduate students (who have to study hard)'. As this shows, students are aware that there is a negative image among Japanese people of studying abroad and of those who have done so (see Section 2.2.2 for further discussion). Behind the negative image, there is the fact that there are a number of people who study abroad

because they cannot find a job in Japan during the continuing recession, or as a result of failure in university entrance examinations (see Section 2.3.3).

The three other women (two single and one married) referred to parents and friends who saw their attitudes in continuing to study as unwise or useless, and recommended that they should get married or remain housewives instead: none of the three was told to get a job and earn money. This kind of parents' and friends' attitude is well-explained by Guggenbuhl-Craig.

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W9 explained how harsh people around her were when she became interested in being financially independent as a teacher of Japanese.

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[W9, married, late 30s, MA in Applied Linguistics, part-time]

In contrast with these women, one man PhD student said that some people whom he met through working for a consultancy firm part-time alongside his studies looked down upon him because he was a student. The two other men, an MA student and a PhD student, referred to their neighbours and relatives who urged them to start working, instead of studying for so long. M53, for example, was sometimes irritated by 'sermons' from his ex-colleague whom he used to work with at a cramming school in Japan, and who lives with him in London.

QUOTATION REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

QUOTATION REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

[M53, single, early 20s, MA in Learning and Teaching of English, full-time]

It is clear that unlike women, who are pushed to seek happiness in marriage, men are urged to get a job; because they are men, they are never expected to lead a married life before they get a decent job.

Mentions categorised under 'Expectations from parents, teachers and/or friends are high' present considerable differences between women and men. The gender difference indicates that more women than men were sensitive to how other people saw them (Sharpe, 1976: 139, 155). For example, W10, who had understanding parents, felt pressure from their praise.

QUOTATION REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Another woman, W16, whose parents were disgusted because she was studying music abroad (see W16 on p. 131), also felt strong pressure from the expectations of other people around her.

QUOTATION REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Another woman said that she wanted to try to get good marks, to avoid telling her mother that her marks were all mere 'pass' level. She also added that she wanted to come up to the expectations of the teacher, who had taught her previously and was

willing to employ her at the junior college where he worked. Another woman said that she hated very much to be told that she was great because she was a student at the University of London. The reason she disliked this was that there was a gap between her friends' image of her - 'You are great! You must be intelligent enough to do everything without any difficulty' - and the reality that she had been facing a serious setback,<sup>84</sup> because of the demanding course. In this respect, it is clear that this student was suffering not only in her educational life - i.e. an issue to do with the course - but also in her personal life - i.e. an issue to do with pressure from other people - and that these issues are interacting.

Examining these women's comments, it is clear that if appreciation and expectation exceed a certain limit, they can truly corner women students,<sup>85</sup> who often do not know how to cope with them and can only struggle to meet them (Dowling: 1988/1994; Sechiyama, 1996: 203-204; Walton, 1996: 9).

## **6.5 Issues related to emotional insecurity**

A variety of comments as to emotional insecurity were made by both women and men, and some of them overlap with 'Issues to do with the course' discussed in Section 5.3. However, their comments were not necessarily related only to these issues, but were likely also to reflect their individual personalities.

The number of mentions in this area was never large, and the mentions given by women and men are scattered across six issues as shown in the following Table 6-5. None shows either a clear difference between the genders or commonality to both genders. Nonetheless, mentions are relatively concentrated on two issues: 'Feel inferiority towards other people', and 'Have a doubt about my potential'. Interestingly, the reasons why the students who mentioned these issues felt lack of confidence about themselves were often related across genders to the fact that some of their friends had achieved something they had not achieved, for example, careers, degrees, and qualifications. In addition, there are a few who felt lack of confidence without any clear

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<sup>84</sup> I have met two women who were taking MA courses at the Institute of Education and did not participate in this research, who said that it was the first time in their lives that they had faced a setback academically.

<sup>85</sup> Sechiyama (1996: 184) refers to the risk of the mother's excessive expectations of her child.

reason. These students did not differ from the rest in respect of their academic careers, such as which universities they graduated from, whether they had already got MA or PhD degrees, or whether or not they had full-time jobs. An example is M55, a man postdoctoral student with financial support from his employer. M55 had a PhD degree already and his research proposal was appreciated by his employer as well as by the college he had been attending. There seemed to be no reason why he should suffer from lack of confidence, but he said, 'I know I don't have to, but I still suffer from a sense of inferiority for some reason'.

**Table 6-5 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to emotional insecurity**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(4) Emotional Insecurity	Feel inferiority towards other people *	3	2	5
	Have a doubt about my potential	3	1	4
	Feel insecure because of the lack of a sense of belonging	2	0	2
	Being a perfectionist	1	0	1
	My knowledge is poor when I think about my age	0	1	1
	Lack of social skill	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions**</b>	9	5	14
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	5	3	8
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	20	24	44
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* As is seen in Table 5-3 on p. 90, Table 6-2 on p. 118, and Table 6-3 on p. 128 there are similar issues such as 'Feel inferiority towards my course-mates', 'Feel inferiority towards my friends of my generation who earn money' and 'Feel inferiority towards my friends of my generation who are married (with children). Therefore, 'other people' in this issue refers to people who are *not* 'her/his course-mates', 'friends of her/his generation who earn money', or 'friends of her/his generation who are married (with children)'.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several issues.

It is also clear from the relationship between the number of mentions and that of respondents that only a few students across both genders tended to suffer from one or more issues of emotional insecurity.

## 6.6 Issues related to relationships with parents

One of the central concerns for many women was their parents (see Section 6.2). This section will further the discussion, and demonstrate the possibility that the close relationship between daughters and parents could result in preventing them from being independent of each other. In the case of the daughters - in other words women respondents - the purposes of their study abroad could be fundamentally in question, if they were more interested in maintaining a close relationship with their parents (emotionally as well as physically and geographically) than in utilising their experience or knowledge gained through studying abroad in a subsequent career. Some of these women's parents lived remote areas and going back to them often meant limiting their occupational opportunities.

**Table 6-6 The Frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned issues related to relationship with parents**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(5) Relationships with Parents	Worried about my parents	4	0	4
	Suffer homesickness	2	0	2
	Have lived with my parents too long to be independent	1	0	1
	Feel responsibility towards my parents	1	0	1
	My mother lives through my life	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	9	0	9
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	7	0	7
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	18	27	45
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned more than one issue.

All of the mentions were made by women, which suggests that issues to do with relationships with parents were specific to women. There are five kinds of issues in this area, but they may be roughly categorised into three areas: (1) concern as dutiful

daughters about their parents,<sup>86</sup> (2) difficulty in living on their own, and (3) the mother's dependency on her daughter. It is clear that more women than men maintained close relationships with their parents, and some of them had fallen into a situation where they could not act outside the relationship with their parents. Interestingly, women who referred to issues related to parents tended to refer to their concerns about marriage, too.

In contrast, women and men who did not mention issues to do with their parents seldom mentioned concerns about marriage, either, suggesting that they were more independent-minded and interested in something other than marriage, for instance, careers.

Although issues to do with relationships with parents were peculiar to women, worries about parents were especially common among them, as well as indicating a gender difference; four women made mentions categorised under the issue, while no man did so. For example, W6, who had one elder sister, said:

*My older sister... She got married after I came to the UK. My parents feel so lonely partly because of this... So they are waiting for me to complete my MA and go back to Japan, and I have decided to do so.*

[W6, single, late 20s, Diploma in Education, full-time]

Another woman said that she wanted to go back to her parents as soon as possible, because they were waiting for her return. Another said that if something bad happened to her parents, she would immediately give up her studies and go back to Japan in order to take care of them, and the fourth woman stated that her parents missed her, and she missed them, and the telephone therefore played an important role for them: she called her parents 3-5 times a week, averaging 30 minutes per phone-call.

In relation to the comment on communication with parents given by the last women, there are interesting findings from the questionnaire conducted with the same 52 research participants. Women greatly exceeded men in both the average frequency and the amount per month of contact time with their families through phone-calls. On average, women made 3.5 and men 2.1 calls, and women talked for 69 and men 33 minutes. The largest and smallest number of phone-calls was 14.5 and 0.5 for women,

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<sup>86</sup> Schaie and Willis (1996: 157, 162) discuss children's concern about their parents further. See also Dowling (1988/1994) for a discussion of daughters' concern about their parents.



and 9 and 0.2 times for men. The longest and shortest length of contact time was 480 and 6 minutes for women, and 240 and 1 minute for men.<sup>87</sup> It is clear from these figures that women communicated with their families nearly twice as much as men. When the possibility is taken into account that many of their siblings were already married or living separately from their parents because of study or work, their main contacts in Japan were probably their parents rather than their siblings.<sup>88</sup> The gender difference in the amount of communication clearly indicates that women tended to maintain an emotionally closer relationship with their parents than men.<sup>89</sup> Due to the reduction in the charge for international telephone calls, today's Japanese students in the UK need not suffer from homesickness as much as Japanese students in the UK in the past, nor as much as students studying in the UK from developing countries.

Although the literature tends to focus only on the close relationship between the mother and child, as if the father was an outsider in the relationship (Friedan, 1965: 251; Ogura, 1994: 181; Phillips, 1996; Schaie and Willis, 1996; Sechiyama, 1996), most of the women who referred to their parents in this research used the word, 'parents' instead of 'mother'. This implies that they maintained close relationships with *both mothers and fathers*. The reason for this close relationship with both parents might be that fathers as well as mothers were understanding about their studying abroad; it was clear that many of them were playing an important role as financial supporters of their daughters (see Section 2-7 in Appendix III-1). Moreover, it can be imagined that the relationship between such fathers and their daughters has been good for a long time, regardless of the fact that daughters decided to study abroad.

Furthermore, it is also clear from the content of their comments that more women

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<sup>87</sup> The man who recorded the largest number of phone-calls and the longest length of communication had left his wife who was expecting a baby just after his departure for the UK in Japan. It is therefore possible to guess that he had spoken mainly with his wife, but not with his parents. In passing, the second largest number of phone-calls among men was 4.5 times and the second longest length of communication among men was 120 minutes.

<sup>88</sup> In passing, women's average length as well as frequency of communication with their boyfriends and men's with their girlfriends per month were almost the same: women 89 and men 85 minutes, and women 10.3 and men 10.7 times. It is interesting to note that both women and men communicate with their boy/girlfriends much more extensively than with parents: three to five times as many and long.

<sup>89</sup> As with other findings, while both women and men tended to communicate with their family through phone-calls, both were apt to communicate with their boy/girlfriends mainly through phone-calls but sometimes also e-mails. While women tended to communicate with other friends mainly through phone-calls and occasionally e-mails, this was reversed in the case of men. The Asahi (25 June 2000) reports the result of a survey conducted with 521 young Japanese people in Tokyo and Hanshin areas in January and February 2000, and says that there is a tendency that they communicate with boy/girl friends on the phone and with their friends through e-mails.

than men felt a strong responsibility for their parents' happiness. In other words, the women believed they themselves must provide happiness for their parents. The desire to live near or with their parents is an expression of this belief (as demonstrated in Sections 6.2 and 8.4).

## 6.7 'Other' issues

As has been shown, the number of issues during the period of their study abroad mentioned by women exceeded that of men, and I suggested two possible reasons for this earlier in this chapter: firstly, women tend to face more issues than men when studying abroad, and secondly, women are more open than men to verbalising their issues. This section will further clarify that more women than men do indeed encounter a variety of issues, and that little can be done about some of these.

**Table 6-7 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned 'other' issues**

Area	Issue	No. of respondents mentioning each issue		Total
		Women	Men	
(6) 'Other'	Have changed in a negative way	3	1	4
	Started my course at an advanced age	2	0	2
	Strong academic background may put me in a difficult position when I return to my workplace	1	0	1
	Worried about a blank period in terms of career	1	0	1
	Should have chosen a career which would have enabled me to be an independent person	1	0	1
	The older I get, the more restriction I face	1	0	1
	Too far away to keep up with what is going on at my workplace	0	2	2
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	9	3	12
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	6	3	9
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any issues in this area</b>	19	24	43
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some women respondents mentioned several issue.

The Table 6-7 includes those issues which did not fit into the other main areas of either educational life or personal life. However, interestingly enough, all of them were related to personal life. The table shows, first, that there were 12 mentions in total number spread over the seven issues. 'Other' issues varied among individuals, particularly among women. The mentions may be roughly categorised into three issues: (1) deteriorating manners and discipline through living in a foreign country, where students can detach themselves from the social expectations of Japan, (2) the disadvantages of advancing age and of a strong academic background,<sup>90</sup> and (3) concerns about careers. In particular, women tended to refer to a variety of regrets about what they had done or not done in the past, or concerns about the future about which little could be done at the time. The issues men mentioned were fewer, and related to more current situations or realities. The gender difference implies that women's issues are easily accumulated and liable to become complex, trapping them in situations from which they cannot escape.

Yet, as a whole, most women and men did not mention anything which could fit only in this area. This means that most of the issues, which both women and men faced in their personal lives were concentrated in the eight main areas of educational and personal lives which we have already considered.

## **6.8 Summary and discussion**

Apart from three women and eight men, all the other 41 students mentioned issues related to their personal lives, and the comments were more varied and significant than those on their educational lives. This definitely suggests a need to pay more attention to international students' personal life, in order to promote their well being and the successful completion of their study abroad.

'Financial difficulties' or 'financial issues' have been reported elsewhere to be one of the major issues for international students (Church, 1982; Uehara and Hicks, 1989; Mullins et al., 1995; Li et al., 1997; Li and Kaye, 1998). For example, Uehara and Hicks (1989: 133) report that international students in Japan mainly suffer from financial issues, i.e. 'the money sent from their home countries has little value in Japan'.

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<sup>90</sup> Oakley (1990: 84) discusses this issue further.

Issues to do with finance were commonly seen among both women and men in this study, too: more than half of the respondents, among both women and men, referred to such issues. However, what was demonstrated in this study was that many suffered from psychological issues associated with money, rather than issues to do with whether they had enough money to sustain their student lives. Similarly, Mullins et al. (1995: 213) report that financial issues were a serious concern for international students, but '[most of their comments] were concerned with the cost of education, particularly in relation to the quality of the education and services provided (i.e. value for money)'. The difference between Uehara and Hick's study and the current and Mullins et al.'s studies cautions us not simply to assume that issues to do with 'finance' mean 'financial difficulties'. At the same time, the difference between Uehara and Hick's and Mullins et al.'s studies and the current study warn us not to simplify that issues to do with finance are always related to their educational lives.

Moreover, although Li et al. (1997: 34) summarise that '[t]he most important problems for Asian and "Others" were financial problems, academic progress and accommodation'; we must be careful to avoid oversimplification about an economically diverse region. There are considerable economic differences among Asian countries and areas, some of which are developing countries whilst others are amongst the most economically developed in the world. This gives rise to different kinds of issues to do with finance among students,<sup>91</sup> as discussed above. (see Section 6.2)

It also became clear in this study that there were considerable differences between genders over issues to do with finance, as well as over ways to address such issues. More than half the women who had financial support from parents or spouse suffered a sense of guilt, while few men in the same position did. This accords with Verthelyi's finding on wives who accompanied their husbands for their postgraduate study in the US. He reports that for some wives 'being away meant increased preoccupation about their family's well being and strong guilt feelings about not carrying out their more traditional role as responsible daughters' (Verthelyi, 1995: 401). However, the difference between the spouses in Verthelyi's study and the women in this study was that while the former group went abroad because of the decisions made by others (their

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<sup>91</sup> In addition, a Chinese student who spent a considerable time outside China, in Japan and Australia, found that 'there were greater similarities between Chinese and Australian cultures than between Chinese and Japanese' (quoted in Kenway and Langmead [2000: 15]), which indicates diversity in many aspects

husbands), and therefore often without direct choice, the latter group did so through their own free choice. It is therefore highly possible that their sense of guilt towards their families was stronger among my research participants.

To reduce the sense of guilt, women in this study usually intended to return to Japan and live with or near their parents to make up for the inconvenience they were causing to them. This sounds unfortunate, because living with or near their parents could mean limiting their opportunities to look for a job. However, their plans are not surprising if even the wives in Verthelyi's study suffered severely.

In contrast to these women, men aimed to complete their courses as soon as possible and to get a decent job to lighten the burden they had imposed on their parents' shoulders. In this respect, contrary to the assumptions of previous studies, certain kinds of concerns about finance may work in a positive way to motivate students to complete their courses early. Issues to do with finance do not always influence academic lives negatively (cf. Uehara and Hicks, 1989: 135; Li et al., 1997: 36). Moreover, the men's way of thinking could be seen as the expression of their sense of their duty to work as men, and their interest in advancing their careers, while the women's could be regarded as an expression of their lack of confidence and interest in advancing their careers, or even as their choice to avoid the difficulties of starting a career.

Some women who were not particularly concerned about their careers may have decided to study abroad not for career advancement but for their personal growth or fulfilment (Leonard, 1998b: 28; Habu 2000: 52). Jiang (1994) suggests that studying abroad has shifted from a 'developmental function' to an orientation to personal fulfilment, which is justifiable for these women. Yet, only some of the respondents felt this way: other women did not necessarily see studying abroad as a means towards personal fulfilment.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast with women, who might feel guilt towards their parents and spouse, men were apt to have a sense of inferiority towards friends of their own generation who were earning money, and they also felt disconnected because of not working, especially those who had work experience previously. They seemed to believe they should be working at their age, around 30, as most people, including their friends, were doing; and

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among Asian countries.

<sup>92</sup> It is worth examining the reasons why students had decided to study abroad in relation to this point. See Chapter 7.

this led them to see themselves as social deviants. Moreover, the sense of disconnection of some men suggested they felt more comfortable staying in the labour market than having their own time by being detached from their jobs.

This contrasts sharply with Allen et al.'s findings (1990: 33) in their research on the occupational destinations of graduates of the University of Bradford. They concluded that 'men consider career breaks an attractive and feasible opportunity to either gain further qualifications or travel'. Given the issues found among men in the current study seemed to be leading them positively to complete their courses early and look for jobs, the difference between men in their study and the current one, and the differences in the issues to do with finance raised by women and men in the current study, it is clear that Japanese men seek their identity through their career or within the heavily structured labour market (Funabashi, 1995: 63).

If, as Habu states (2000: 61), Japanese women study abroad not primarily for economic betterment but for the personal fulfilment they cannot gain in Japan, then it is possible to say that many men are eager, as well as pressured, to fulfil themselves within the Japanese social system, i.e. by achieving a high status in their career, while women are largely excluded from this system.<sup>93</sup> This is because the Japanese social system is still men-centred (Nakamura, T., 2000: 99) and essentially structured *for*, *by*, and *of* men, who can steadily establish themselves within it. But if they stay outside it for long, they are banished, and labelled 'dropouts', which scares many men.

Few other authors writing on international students refer to issues do with marriage. But in this study marriage came to the fore as a serious concern among nearly half of the single women. (Most of the single men and a few single women saw getting a job as their priority and marriage as something they should consider later.) This finding therefore does not accord with Jiang's study (1994), which concluded that international students' major concern is their career prospects: his finding was only applicable to men and a few women in this study. The women among my research participants who were anxious about remaining single tended to see their situation through comparison with their friends who had 'outstripped' them by marrying and sometimes already having children. Consequently, they were seized with a sense of inferiority, and felt depressed - just as Namavar (1984) also found that women who perceived the typical member of

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<sup>93</sup> Walby (1986:30) says '...women have been simply added on to existing concerns'.

their society to be more traditional were more depressed. The ideal age for marriage is perceived as to be before or around 30 among highly educated Japanese women in general (Miyamoto et. al., 1997: 60; Mukuno, 2000: 197-199) and this was also widely believed to be ideal among the women in this study, regardless of the length of their stay in the UK. They did not reject this traditional view, even when they had been in foreign countries with different norms for some time.<sup>94</sup>

Some women were also under pressure to get married at the appropriate time, not only from within themselves but also from parents or relatives, and all these pressures were strongly connected to being 'before or around 30'. There is consensus among single women and people in general that women's primal happiness should be in marriage. However, this consensus can also be interpreted to imply that women can hardly seek their happiness anywhere else, for instance, in work; and that marriage must be the *only* source of happiness for them. Men are less expected to seek their happiness in marriage than women because there is more possibility of men gaining fulfilment in work (as well as in marriage).

In contrast to women's being pressured to marry in time, men were urged to get a job first, which meant that they were not expected to marry until they were settled in employment. The different expectations towards women and men clarified in this study coincide with Stockman et al.'s finding (1995: 14) that the segregation of spheres for women and men was more intense in Japan than in any of the other countries - the US, the UK and China.

Some married men encountered issues concerning 'marriage' in the dilemma of wanting to study more but feeling restricted by, and yet having a responsibility towards their family. All these men had brought their wives and *children* with them (and the reason why only men mentioned this dilemma was that only men brought their families with them). For some married men with children, child-care was not only a part of their familial responsibility, but also the source of a sense of guilt toward their wives, who had to spend a considerable amount of time on child-care while they themselves were studying. Oropeza et al.'s (1991: 281) statement that '[t]he magnitude and scope of adjustment problems becomes multiplied by the number of members in the family' seems to apply.

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<sup>94</sup> Namavar (1984) also obtained a similar result in a study of international women postgraduate students in the US.

It is worth noting that some wives accompany their elite husbands to London to study as postgraduates in the UK. Their husbands have either themselves decided to study abroad or been sent by their employers, either to study or to work in their London offices. These women had a similar academic background to their husbands, but they take diploma or MA courses, which they can complete within their husbands' postings. These Japanese wives were superior in both their experience of travelling abroad and their language proficiency (and probably their husbands' financial capacity, too) to the majority of spouses accompanying their husbands to the US in Verthelyi's study, where 30 out of the 49 wives were 'hoping' to take postgraduate courses (Verthelyi, 1995: 393, 396, 399). None of the Japanese wives in this study had any children. They were very likely to have other occasions to accompany their husbands' national and international relocation following their companies' appointments,<sup>95</sup> which made it difficult for them to plan their own life. Clearly their life 'choices' depend on their husbands' life choices. They act within their traditional framework of marriage as wives and mothers, although they may *appear* to be enjoying the freedom to make their own choices by taking a postgraduate course.

The pressures from or towards other people felt by both women and men in this study have also seldom been focused upon in other studies on international students.<sup>96</sup> But the objections people had made to my informants about their study abroad are worth noting because a relatively large number of my respondents referred to them, though the kinds of objections received varied.

For example, some women were aware of prejudice in Japan against studying abroad as well as against people who have studied abroad. Studies about those who have returned to Japan after international higher education are still limited, whilst work on returnee children seem to be actively undertaken (see, for example, White, 1988; Sato, 1997; Shibuya, 2001). However, the stress which returnee children experience in Japanese society is often shared by those who have lived abroad at more advanced ages, i.e. over 20. As discussed in Section 2.2.2, it is not unusual for those who have studied abroad to be discriminated against when they look for a job because of the prejudice that they will be difficult to cope with and will keep insisting on their own ideas.

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<sup>95</sup> It is not unusual that employees in large Japanese companies, especially banks, insurance companies, and manufacturers, are relocated every three to five years, both nationally and internationally.

<sup>96</sup> Exceptionally, Habu (2000) explores this point.



Similar prejudice is also directed against those who do doctoral and sometimes MA degrees in Japanese higher educational institutions.<sup>97</sup> So postgraduate students who are educated in foreign countries face dual discrimination. There is also a contradiction: the workplaces where PhD degree holders can look for a job are often limited to academic institutions such as universities, but they are not always welcome just because they have PhDs. Many existing members of university staff do not have PhDs because they were not necessary when they were looking for their posts (Yamamoto, 1995: 127), and some of them are therefore reluctant to hire PhD holders, especially younger ones. There is simultaneously a lack of respect for foreign PhD degrees still strongly permeating some Japanese academics.<sup>98</sup> The experience of two participants, a woman and a man, who said their study abroad was opposed by their university lecturers 'for no reason', may be related to this current situation in the Japanese academic world.

Although the Japanese government has been eager to receive foreign students in order to internationalise Japan, investing a lot of money in encouraging them (see Section 2.4), the government must realise there is also a chance to internationalise Japan by making use of its nationals who study abroad. It needs to pressure Japanese universities to be open to PhD degree holders from abroad. Moreover, UK academic institutions should support their former international students by encouraging academic institutions in students' home countries to employ their former students through sponsoring their education (as some universities do with companies in Japan). This would help not only the UK's former international students in their occupational advancement, but also the UK in obtaining more international students. If prospective students judge that getting a degree from a UK academic institution helps them obtain a post at an academic institution in their home country, they will be more likely to study in the UK, increasing its number of international students.

As regards gender differences in pressure from or towards other people, women respondents had tended to be told that study abroad was not useful for their future and that they had better get married or be housewives. They were not necessarily expected to make use of their study abroad in a career, even though they had been paying expensive tuition fees. In contrast, men appeared to be urged to work. The difference

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<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Ushiogi (1993: 310) and Yamamoto (1995: 129). Ushiogi also discusses the prejudice towards doctoral students in science in Japan.

<sup>98</sup> In similar way, Burn (1985: 60) refers to the tendency for American academics to believe that 'the

between the social expectations towards women and towards men was evident.

There were also some women who referred to high expectations from their parents, teachers or friends. This issue was restricted to women and was not mentioned by men - unlike Oropeza's research (1991: 281) which says that international students in general face pressure in relation to family loyalty and pride. In this study, some of the women who mentioned this issue suffered because of these high expectations, and some agonised not only about the expectations but also over their own desires to meet them. As Kohlberg (1967 cited in Sharpe, 1976: 142) states, '[t]he girls reach a "good girl" stage earlier in their development than boys, and stay there longer'. These women seem still to be playing the role of good girls. However, as they did not know how to deal with excessive expectations, these seemed to be tormenting them. One good example was a woman who felt a strong dilemma between the academic setback she had been facing in her study and the high expectations of people around her. She was suffering not only in her educational life, but also in her personal life - again suggesting the inadequacy of trying to separate one from the other.

Mullins et al. (1995: 211) found that fear of failure, loss of motivation, nervousness and tension, and doubts about academic ability were highly ranked problems among both international and local Australian students - but they studied emotional insecurity only in relation to educational life and regardless of gender. In the current study, there were some mentions related to emotional insecurity, but these issues did not appear to be as serious as in Mullins et al.'s participants (see also Section 6.5) and there were no clear differences between or commonality to gender. It was clear, however, that anyone could feel emotionally insecure, regardless of having such advantages as excellent educational or occupational backgrounds.

Issues to do with parents are also worth attention, first because those had been little explored in previous studies,<sup>99</sup> and secondly because only women mentioned relationships with parents. These were therefore a specific problem to women, most of whom had financial support from their parents. Many of the mentions suggested dutifulness towards their parents and the close relationship between women and their parents. Women's frequency as well as the length of communication with their parents was twice that of men. Verthelyi (1995: 400) states that the degree of feelings of

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education offered by their colleges or universities is superior to that in other countries'.

<sup>99</sup> Exceptionally, Habu (2000) explores this point.

longing and sadness about separation from family and friends depended less on the length of the separation than on the closeness of the previous relationship. This appeared to be applicable to the women in this research.

In addition, women seemed to have strong mutual understanding not only with their mothers, who are often regarded as the only parent close to a child, but also with their fathers. Otherwise parents, particularly fathers in many cases,<sup>100</sup> would not have supported their daughters financially, nor would either parents or daughters be interested in communicating with each other so much. This close relationship with parents may be one of the peculiarities often seen among highly educated women, as Bhalalusesa (1998: 27) implies.

In Japan, there seem to be many parents who believe it is their responsibility to support their children's undergraduate study financially, paying both tuition fees and living expenses (Nihon Joshi Shakaikyoikukai, 1995: 142, Miyamoto et al., 1997; see also Section 2.3.3). However, fewer parents have the same attitude to their children's postgraduate study, either because parents are less interested in this or because they do not see it as their responsibility to pay tuition fees for further study.<sup>101</sup> The former seems to apply particularly to parents of daughters.<sup>102</sup> There is a depressing view in Japan that for today's children, 'a good parent means a parent who gives money (Saito, 1999: 26), as if whether or not children can get money from their parents determines their affection towards their parents. However, in this study the situation did not appear to be so simple. There was a deep mutual affection between women and their parents, although there is still the possibility that the situation could be different if their parents did not have as much money as they actually had. On the other hand, these women worried about their parents too much to think about developing their own full potential. It is therefore possible to say that the close relationship between daughters and parents (or mothers only) might result in preventing each from being independent of the other,

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<sup>100</sup> Most of the students who had financial support from their parents had housewife mothers. See Appendix III-1 for more detail.

<sup>101</sup> Soumucho Seishounen Taisaku Hombu (1996: 46) shows that the number of parents who hope their children will go to postgraduate school is well below the number who want their children to go to university. See also Nihon Joshi Shakaikyoikukai (1995:135).

<sup>102</sup> Soumucho Seishounen Taisaku Hombu (1996: 141) shows that parents' expectation of their children achieving educationally varies considerably by gender: 67.5% of parents hope their sons will go to university, while 39.6% of them hope this for their daughters. Accordingly, 2.6% of parents hope their sons will go to postgraduate schools, while 0.9% hope their daughters will do so. See also Soumucho Seishounen Taisaku Hombu (1997: 146-147).

and in 'wasting' what daughters have learned through higher education.

There were some other issues, in educational as well as personal lives which could not be categorised in any of the other eight areas, and these varied among individuals, especially among women, although all were related to personal life. As a whole, women tended to suffer from features of their situation, which they could hardly change or do little about, while men were apt to worry about more manageable problems. What became clear in my study was that women tended to suffer from more issues and in more complicated ways than men.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

Much of the existing literature reports that international students' most significant problems are: financial, academic progress, accommodation, mixing with UK students, lack of academic support and homesickness, all of which are related to their academic life (or 'educational life' in this research). However, the past two chapters have challenged this assumption through highlighting another aspects of student's life ('personal life'). Moreover, the existing literature has tried to seek interrelationships between students' problems only within those in their academic life, while this study shows the interrelationships between problems in students' educational and their personal life.

International students encounter many issues across both genders, and there are many differences between genders as well as within genders. In particular, a lot of men and women agonised that they were dependent on financial support from their parents or relatives, and men especially tended to agonise about their lack of financial capacity. However, while women tended to encounter issues to do with marriage and parents most, men were apt to suffer from issues to do with career. The interference they received from other people around them was also associated with those areas.

If we concentrate on especially noticeable points, the first important one is that single women with financial support from their parents suffered most from many issues, and often in relation to marriage and parents. They appeared to be at times obsessed by issues to do with marriage and parents while studying abroad. Some comments give the impression that those women were so concerned about marriage and so invested in their

parents' happiness that they renounced the chance to develop their own skills and interests. Such attitudes raise an important question. If they are so worried about marriage and their parents, why did these women decide to study abroad, when this might cause a delay in their chance of looking for a man and getting married, and also separate them, albeit temporarily, from their loving parents? This question is heightened through comparison with many single men, who appeared to be career-minded and who become upset when they thought about their positions as men who did not work or earn money yet. Their decision to study abroad seemed to make more sense, but only if it was taken (mainly or partly) because they wanted to advance their careers. The following chapter will examine more fully the reasons which had led these Japanese postgraduate students to decide to study in the UK.

## Chapter 7

### Coming to Britain

#### 7.1 Overview of reasons mentioned by respondents

As expected, the students interviewed gave a variety of reasons for their decision to come to the UK and for undertaking postgraduate work. All the respondents mentioned more than one reason, and the reasons sometimes interacted in complex ways.

Before turning to a closer examination of each area, a few remarks should be made concerning the picture indicated by the following Table 7-1 as a whole. Firstly, a total of 160 mentions were made, 87 by women and 73 by men, an average of 3.5: 2.7. The average number between women and men was 3.1. Women thus provided rather more reasons for studying abroad, perhaps because they had more reasons, or because they were better at expressing their thoughts than men, or both, as discussed in the two previous chapters. Moreover, women's purposes were possibly less clear than men's, which increased the number of reasons they mentioned. Secondly, no respondents mentioned only one reason: this corresponded with what Rudd found in his research, as mentioned earlier (see Section 4.6.3). It is also worth noting that the reasons mentioned by the students seldom carried equal importance: they ranged from very important to being of merely additional value. In other words, students gave 'different weighting' to the reasons, as can be seen in the following example of M43 who was sponsored by his employer, a bank:

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[M43, early 30s, Married with a child, MBA, full-time]

**Table 7-1 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned reasons for studying abroad**

Area*	Sub-area	Women		Men		Total	
		No. of Mentions	No. of respondents	No. of Mentions	No. of respondents	No. of Mentions	No. of respondents
(1) Study	General interest in study	17	10	9	6	26	16
	Specific interest in study	10	8	15	10	25	18
	Sub total	27	14	24	13	51	27
(2) Careers		20	18	15	12	35	30
(3) Living abroad	Interest in living abroad	16	12	4	2	20	14
	Interest in making use of the experience	3	3	2	2	5	5
	Sub total	19	14	6	3	25	17
(4) Advice or influence from others		9	8	13	10	22	18
(5) Financial reasons		3	3	6	5	9	8
(6) Other reasons		9	8	9	6	18	14
Sub total		87	25	73	27	160	52
No reasons mentioned		-	0	-	0	-	0
N		-	25	-	27	-	52

\* Each area had several reasons.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

The students' responses were classified into six areas. Two of these - '(1) Reasons related to study' and '(3) Reasons related to living abroad' - needed further division, according to the contents. Taking a close look at Table 7-1, it is clear that while men saw two factors, 'study' and 'career', as important, women added a third, 'living abroad'. Moreover, mentions related to interest in living abroad show a striking gender

difference: the number of mentions made by women was three times as many as that by men. The mentions categorised under '(6) Other reasons' also merit special attention. They were varied, and are not only interesting for their own sake, but also give additional information to understand the mentions in the major areas (see examples on p. 189). I will now explore each area in terms of 'content' in detail.

## **7.2 Reasons related to study**

The most common reasons for their study abroad students mentioned were those related to study. This might appear 'natural', given the cost they had to pay - i.e. in both money and the time they had to spend - and the educational level they were at.

There seems to be a common presumption among academics that international students must study abroad because they are interested in study. This presumption has led them to research actively these students' study life or educational life (see, for example, Samuelowicz, 1987; Kinnell, 1990; Mullins et al., 1995). However, it has become clear in this study that student study-related reasons for their decisions to study abroad varied. They also presented interesting commonalities to, and differences between, genders, as well as differences within each gender.

The following Table 7-2 shows some interesting features. Firstly, the mentions categorised in this area formed two sub-areas: some comprised very general comments concerning study whilst others were more specific.

Secondly, three reasons had relatively many mentions: 'Wanted to continue studying', 'To improve my English', 'Had an interest in the chosen subject'. Moreover, if we take into account that there was only one more reason - 'Advancement of current or future career' in (2) Reasons related to career - which had as many mentions as these three reasons in all the other main areas from (2) Reasons related to career to (5) Reasons related to financial reasons - it is possible to say that mentions were concentrated in (1) Reasons related to study.

Thirdly, while women made more mentions related to 'general interest in study' than in relation to 'specific interest in study', this was reversed in the case of men. This difference implies that women initially had fewer clear plans for study abroad at a postgraduate level than men.



**Table 7-2 The frequency with which Japanese postgraduate students mentioned reasons related to study**

Area	Reason		No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total	
			Women	Men		
(1) Study	General interest in study	Wanted to continue studying	7	4	11	
		To improve my English	6	4	10	
		Preferred taking a postgraduate course to going to a language school	3	0	3	
		Wanted to go to a postgraduate school for a long time	1	1	2	
		Sub total	Total no. of mentions*	17	9	26
			Total no. of respondents	10	6	16
	Specific interest in study	Had an interest in the chosen subject	4	6	10	
		Teacher and/or institution had a good reputation	4	1	5	
		Impossible to learn the subject in Japan	1	4	5	
		There was not any suitable course except my current course	1	0	1	
		The subject is more advanced and/or interesting in the UK than in both/either Japan and/or the US	0	4	4	
		Sub total	Total no. of mentions*	10	15	25
	Total no. of respondents		8	10	18	
	Total no. of mentions*		27	24	51	
	Total no. of respondents		14	13	27	
	Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reason in this area		11	14	25	
	N		25	27	52	

\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

Fourthly, it is worth noting that almost half of the total students (11 women and 14 men) in this study did not mention any reasons related to study as their reasons for their study abroad. This challenges the assumption of academics stated above.

Bearing these implications in mind, I shall now go on to examine both the common and the different features through comparing the findings by gender.

### 7.2.1 General interest in study

There were many mentions in relation to the desire to continue studying or to improve students' English, and it is worth highlighting these desires, for two reasons. One is that many students referred to these two desires across both genders. The other is that mentions related to these two desires showed different features according to gender in respect of the content of the mentions. I shall examine these features together since there is some overlap in some of the respondents with regard to the two reasons concerned.

Amongst the women students, the total numbers of mention of these desires were 13 (seven and six), but these were given by ten women. In contrast, the total number of mentions by men, eight (four and four), were made by only five men. The larger proportion of women to men respondents seems to be related to the fact that none of these women's initial reasons for coming to the UK were to do with enrolling on postgraduate programmes: six had come to the UK initially to learn English, and two to accompany their husbands who had been assigned to study or work abroad by their companies or who had decided to study abroad of their own volition. Another woman had originally come to the UK due to her own relocation to the London office of her former workplace, and the other had arrived in the UK through an exchange programme of her university. For example, W3 originally came to the UK to go to a language school and to broaden her knowledge as an experienced translator. She stated:

*Before taking the course I study now, I took a language course, which was my initial reason for coming to the UK. Despite working as a translator in Japan, I had never been abroad. So I hoped to study English, the culture as well as a background behind the language. (...) I started thinking about doing my present course while I was staying in this country, so I didn't come here to do the course I am taking now.*

[W3, single, late 30s, MA in Applied Linguistics, part-time]

W12 originally came to the UK to accompany her husband who had decided to study abroad of his own volition. She decided to study in London, too:

*I came to this country to accompany my husband, and I went to a language school, but it was so boring that I almost died. I then discussed it with my husband. (...) When I*

*was thinking about what I was going to do next, I happened to watch a TV programme on racism, and in which I saw a black man whose face was swollen because he had been punched by a white man. I then thought that I was not white and might face such an incident someday in the future. The fear and interest led me to study [human rights] at my institution. Moreover, I was stimulated by my husband studying the development in politics at that time.*

[W12, married, early 30s, MPhil/PhD in Women's Studies, full-time]

All ten women who mentioned their desires to continue studying, their interest in improving their English, or both, seemed to have become interested in taking postgraduate studies after they had arrived in the UK. It is also worth noting that two of them initially came to the UK following *someone else's decision*.

In contrast, only half as many men mentioned that they had come to the UK initially for other reasons than to take up current postgraduate studies: two men had been to language schools and three had enrolled in lower level programmes such as undergraduate, diploma, or MA level programmes rather than their current programmes. Moreover, no men came to the UK due to their partner's decision. In this respect, it is possible to say that while many women tended to 'drift into' postgraduate studies (Leonard, 1998b: 28), most men had decided to take postgraduate studies in the UK before leaving Japan.

Gender difference was also seen in mentions of the preference to take a postgraduate course rather than attending a language school: three women mentioned this, but no men. This implies that these women decided to go to postgraduate schools because they were more challenging than language schools. It was as an adventure and the opportunity to fulfil their desire that they took a postgraduate course (Sakae, 1995: 74). These students were not necessarily eager to learn a particular subject for a specific purpose. The following is a comment from W5 who did various things during the period between graduating from her university in Japan and starting her PhD course: teaching music and English to small children at private institutions in Japan, taking a course to become a qualified teacher of Japanese language and an MA course in the UK.

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Another woman's initial reason for coming to the UK was also 'to live abroad'. She was not interested in just learning English, because she thought that merely having learned English would not prove her proficiency when she returned to Japan. Her overall reason was similar to W5's. The other woman was W12, quoted earlier in this section (see W12 on p. 163). She went to a language school, but found it extremely boring and decided to take a diploma course in human rights, in which she had become interested after coming to the UK. Examining these three women, it is clear that they moved sideways to postgraduate programmes.

### **7.2.2 Specific interest in study**

Some women and men mentioned their interest in their chosen subject as a reason for their study abroad. For example, W21, who was one of the youngest women in this study, described her initial reason for coming to the UK:

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She implies here that she could have studied the subject in Japan if she had wanted, but she did not.

M47, who had worked for language schools as a teacher in Tokyo and Malaysia for four years altogether, and came to the UK to advance his career, stated:

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It is also interesting to note that he decided to study education in developing countries as a step towards getting a job he had targeted.

Other women mentioned their interests in human rights, women's studies, and TESOL respectively as their reasons why they decided to study at postgraduate schools in the UK, while other men referred to contemporary cultural process (sociology), British economics, British politics, and fine art administration & curatorship. Considering these subjects, it is clear that some students came to the UK to study subjects in which the UK appears to be more advanced than Japan, or where the UK is the centre for these subjects.

It should be noted that the total number of mentions concerning the interest in chosen subject made by women and men reached ten, and this was one of the most popular reasons for overseas study. In particular, the number of men who referred to their interest in the chosen subject was six, and it was one of the most common mentions made by men over all the reasons, although the number was never large.

Similarly to the tendency in the interest in the chosen subject, more men than women referred to the impossibility of learning their chosen subject in Japan. M39, one of the youngest students in this research, who had decided to take his current course after completing his diploma course at a British university, stated:

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Other men, who chose to study in the UK because of the lack of their subject in

Japan, were reading fine art administration & curatorship, English language & medieval literature, and contemporary cultural process (sociology) respectively. The only woman, who chose to study in the UK because of the unavailability of the subject in Japan, was studying fine art administration & curatorship.

Moreover, only men mentioned as their reasons the advancement of, or interest in, the subject in the UK than in Japan or the US. This was similar to the mentions of the impossibility of learning a subject in Japan, in that more men than women mentioned this and the mentions were related to specific subjects.

The subjects which these men sought outside Japan were in social science with 'international perspectives'. This implies that Japan lags behind in these academic areas compared to the UK, where international mobility of scholars and students is much greater. It also implies that Japan needs to strengthen those areas and also to become more academically mobile, too.

We have examined the mentions to do with subjects - 'Had an interest in the chosen subject', 'Impossible to learn the subject in Japan', and 'The subject is more advanced and/or interesting in the UK than in both/either Japan and/or the US' with particular reference to gender. However, there was also a commonality to both genders seen in these three kinds of mention. Many of the respondents, both women and men, were eager to make use of the knowledge they had gained from the course for their future or current career.

More women than men tended to refer to the importance of the teacher or of the reputation of an institution. This was different from the impossibility of studying the subject in Japan and the greater advancement of and/or interest in the subject in the UK than in Japan or the US, in that more women mentioned it than men.

W8, one of the youngest students in this research, who had spent most of her youth in the US due to her father's work, said:

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In addition to her judgement that her choice of educational institution was important, what was also interesting about her was that she seemed to have decided which country she would study in before choosing the institution. This is similar to the result which Doorbar obtained from a survey of international students from ten selected Asian nations. He states that as to the decision making process, 'in almost 60% of cases the country is pre-selected before any institution, course or city is considered' (1997: 15).

There were two other students (one woman and one man) who mentioned particular institutions, and two students (both women) who referred to particular teachers. (None of them mentioned whether or not they had pre-selected the UK before considering particular teachers and/or institutions). What is known from those students is that there is a strong possibility that those concerned with the reputation of a particular teacher were clear about which subject area they wanted to study. This was not necessarily the case for those basing their choice on the reputation of a particular institution. The women who did refer to particular teachers were among the few who were clear about the area they wanted to study.

### **7.3 Reasons related to Career**

According to Jiang, who has researched international students in UK postgraduate schools, the most important need was in relation to career prospects (Jiang, 1994: 306). His findings are partly true for the Japanese students in this study: many men were worried about their current or future career, but only a few women were concerned about careers during their study abroad (see Section 6.8). This section will further investigate the link between reasons related to careers and study abroad, from the perspective of the reasons for study abroad.

**Table 7-3 The frequency with which students mentioned reasons related to careers**

Area	Reason	No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total
		Women	Men	
(2) Careers	To advance current or future career	12	10	22
	To obtain a degree, status, and/or prestige	3	2	5
	Tired of, fed up with, or had reached a dead-end in my employment	3	3	6
	Achieved a certain point in work and felt OK about leaving the job	1	0	1
	Was necessary to leave my job to continue studying	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	20	15	35
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	18	12	30
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reasons in this area</b>	7	15	22
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

As Table 7-3 shows, reasons related to careers were the second most common type of reason for study abroad among Japanese students in this study, following those related to study. The table also shows five kinds of reasons concerning career: some concerned future or current careers, others were related to careers in the past. The strength of the reason also varied among individuals. Mentions categorised under 'Advancement of current or future career' were especially worth attention because, despite the almost equal number of mentions between women and men, the degree of seriousness about career advancement varied by gender and within genders. More men than women did not refer to reasons in relation to careers, but this seemed to be strongly related to the fact that more men than women were taking temporary leave from their work.

Many students - 12 out of 25 women (48%) and ten out of 27 men (37%) - decided to study abroad with the aim of advancing their current or future career. This was the most common reason, not only among the reasons concerning careers but also among all the reasons in all the six areas. This might give the impression that both women and men were very keen on advancing their careers. However, it was not so simple. On



closer inspection, these mentions show much in common but also differences between women and men, and within each gender. These totals of mentions are therefore open to misinterpretation.

To begin with, the ways and the degree to which the respondents wanted to advance their careers differed. Students varied, from those with keen interest in advancing their career through study abroad, to those who appeared vague. Two examples of students with a strong interest will be discussed. The first is W19, one of the few women students who showed a keen interest in advancing her career in the future.

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[W19, single, late 20s, MBA, full-time]

W19 was unusual in comparison with many of the women students, in three respects. Firstly, she was clearly career-minded, as is shown in this comment and from the fact that she was one of two women MBA students in this study. Moreover, she used to work for an American stock brokerage firm and to be salary-oriented, although she was ashamed of having been so at the time of this interview. Her previous attitudes towards money make a sharp contrast with the general view that women are more interested in intellectual challenge or working conditions than salary (Blau and Ferber 1986; Islam, 1997: 155; Leonard, 1998b: 28). Secondly, she was paying the cost of her studying abroad herself, from her savings. Thirdly, she was the only woman who did not mention any difficulties while studying abroad.

The next student is M57, who also showed keen interest in his career advancement. He first worked for an advertising agency but left because he became seriously ill as a result of working for long hours. He then became a teacher of English at a cramming school.

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The link between M57's study abroad and his career is clearly demonstrated here, and his enthusiasm for studying abroad is well expressed in his words, 'I decided to study abroad at risk of my life'.

Like W19 and M 57, other students who were keen to advance their career also tended to know what sort of job they wanted to obtain. Sometimes, students had even decided what company (organisation) or which department (in the case of students sponsored by their employers) they hoped to work for. Many of these students had already established some connection with people in the field, or had known what they should do to qualify them for the job they wanted (see also M47 on p. 166) or, at least, where they could find necessary information.

In contrast to these students with a strong interest in career advancement, some gave the impression that they cared little about the advancement of their career in reality, although they did verbalise their interest. An example is W18, who came to the UK because her husband, a government official, was appointed to study abroad by his ministry as an MA student. As for her reasons for studying abroad, she stated:

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[W18, married, late 20s, MA in Law, full-time]

She was on one-year leave from her workplace, a law-related foundation. There was therefore a possibility that she would go back to her workplace when she returned to Japan. However, as the comment above indicates, she had two other reasons for taking her course in the UK: one was that she had to come to the UK because of her husband's

study, and the other was to kill time. Her words, 'to kill time' give a strong impression that her studying abroad was a case of 'me-too' - if her husband had not come to this country for his study, she might not have taken her postgraduate course abroad - rather than for the advancement of her career.

A related example is M43, a banker who obtained a chance to study abroad with financial support from his employer, after passing written and oral examinations for the employer's study abroad programme. He had brought his wife and a baby with him.

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Similar to W18, career advancement for M43 was only an additional reason for studying abroad, and the main interest was simply in being sent abroad financially supported.

As has been shown here, there were considerable differences in the degree of students' interest in advancing their career, amongst those who mentioned it. This suggests that it is necessary to examine each mention closely: not over relying on the number, but taking into account the different weighting of reasons so as to accurately determine international students' aims for their study abroad.

Next, I shall examine the difference here between women and men. If we categorise the mentions concerning career by degree of interest and gender, the number of students with a strong interest in advancing their career was 14 (seven women and seven men), with medium interest, two (no women and two men), and with low interest six (five women and one man).

There were five women who mentioned career advancement but were doubtful about whether they were really interested in it, including W18 who said that postgraduate study was a way to kill time (see W18 on p. 171). One woman emphasised a relationship problem as her reason for coming to the UK more than

advancing her career, another woman described exhaustion from her previous work as more important, and another referred to her interest in living abroad. Moreover, there was also a woman who said that she would not mind changing her plan, including her future career, if she had the chance to get married. The comments given by these women clearly indicated that their interest in advancing their careers had little weight in comparison with other more important reasons, and often appeared to be mere 'words'.

In contrast with the relatively large number of women with low interest in advancing their career, there was the only man in the same state: M43 quoted above, who had no clear purpose for studying abroad.

There were therefore more women than men with a low interest in careers, whose initial reasons for deciding to study abroad were other than the advancement of their careers, even though they had verbalised their interest in career advancement.

There were similar numbers of responses to 'Tired of, fed up with, or had reached a dead-end in my employment' for women and men, although the number of mentions was never large. For example, W24, who left her two teen-age children with her mother in Tokyo, used to work as a producer at an art event planning office in Tokyo before coming to the UK. She described how exhausted she was prior to her departure for the UK.

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Examining her comment makes it clear that she decided to come to the UK for a number of reasons, particularly her desire to have a break from her work.

The following example is M51:

Analysing the responses of these students suggests that study abroad plays a role as ‘an oasis’ which provides not only sustenance but also hope for those who are tired of work and/or have experienced hardship in employment.

#### 7.4 Reasons related to living abroad

As discussed in Chapter 2, study abroad has been popular in Japan for a long time, especially since 1973, the year when the floating exchange rate replaced the fixed rate, and the Japanese yen started becoming stronger in international markets. The expression *Ryugaku boom* (study abroad boom) is often used to describe this phenomenon (Regur, 1990: 18; Sakae, 1995: 3).<sup>103</sup> Also, it is a well known fact that women in their 20s are still the main group who study abroad (Ishizuki, 1990: 2; see also Table 2-12), although the age range has rapidly become wider during the last decade: the number of students in their late 20 and early 30s has also been increasing. This section will provide many additional suggestions as to the reasons why more women than men from Japan study abroad.

The following Table 7-4 indicates firstly that the total number of mentions made by women was three times as large as that by men, and the difference was the largest among all six areas. In relation to this, it is remarkable that while more than a half of the women referred to reasons related to living abroad, most men did not mention them. Interestingly, most of the women and men who did not mention any reasons in this area were clearly those who initially came to the UK to study at postgraduate level,

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<sup>103</sup> Ebuchi (1990) calls the phenomenal period ‘*ryugaku bakuhatsu-jidai* (explosive period of study abroad)’.

especially with the aim of career advancement.

**Table 7-4 The frequency with which students mentioned reasons related to living abroad**

Area	Reason		No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total
			Women	Men	
(3) Living Abroad	Interest in living abroad	Have been, have lived in a foreign country	6	2	8
		Wanted to study abroad for a long time*	4	0	4
		Wanted to live abroad for a long time	3	0	3
		Chose to go to a postgraduate school as an excuse for living abroad	2	0	2
		Was interested in Europe or the UK	1	2	3
		<b>Sub total</b>			
		Total no. of mentions**	16	4	20
		Total no. of respondents	12	2	14
	Interest in making use of the experience	Wanted to make use of the experience of living abroad in the future	2	1	3
		To broaden horizons	1	1	2
		<b>Sub total</b>			
		Total no. of mentions**	3	2	5
		Total no. of respondents	3	2	5
	Total no. of mentions**		19	6	25
	Total no. of respondents		14	3	17
	Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reasons in this area		11	24	35
	N		25	27	52

\* Responses categorised into 'Wanted to study abroad for a long time' implied the respondents' stronger interests in living abroad than in studying. The responses were therefore categorised under reasons related to living abroad.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

The table also shows that there are seven kinds of reasons, and they are categorised in two sub-areas. The number of mentions categorised under reasons in the second of these was never large, although it was still interesting that some students sought 'cultural stimulation' in study abroad. I shall therefore mainly concentrate on the reasons in the first group.

A breakdown of the students who mentioned this reason, i.e. cultural stimulation,

in relation to the influence of previous experience of having visited or lived in a foreign country shows that two students (one woman and one man) had spent considerable periods of their lives in the US when they were young: so-called 'returnee children'. One student (a man) had travelled to the US on business several times, and five students (all women) had travelled to the UK previously (see sections 2.9 and 2.10 in Appendix III-1 for further information). These students could be divided into two groups. One who had been to the US but never been to the UK before their studying abroad and, therefore, had wanted to *come* to this country for a long time. The other is those who had been to the UK previously and had hoped to *come back* to this country again. The following are examples of each group. Firstly, M52, who previously worked for an American consultancy firm in Tokyo and left the job to study abroad, stated:

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W4, who had travelled to the UK when she was younger and worked in a law firm in Tokyo and as a lower-secondary school teacher in her home town after leaving Tokyo, said:

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[W4, single, early 30s, MA in TESOL, full-time]

In addition to the group difference in the content of their mentions, there was a gender difference in the number of respondents within the group. More women than men mentioned the influence of their previous experience of having visited or lived in the UK: five against zero. Moreover, all of these women clearly mentioned a long-cherished desire to come back to the UK. In this respect, it is clear that more women

than men take an action to realise a desire which might appear to be fleeting, and that women are socially allowed to do so more than their counterparts.

As for mentions classified as 'Wanted to study abroad for a long time' or 'Wanted to live abroad for a long time', altogether seven women mentioned these reasons. However, no men referred to them. The difference again suggests that it is particularly women who are motivated by a long-cherished desire for studying or living abroad. It is still possible that some men had wanted to study abroad and had realised their desires after a long time, but did not mention this. It is unlikely that study abroad is the result of an instant decision, when the cost and the time-consuming preparation for registration with formal educational institutions are considered (Tedesco, 1997: 105). A possible reason why no men referred to their long-cherished desire for study abroad is that the weight of this desire was small or negligible in comparison with other reasons. W25, for example, described her long-standing wish to study abroad and her efforts to realise her dream before coming to the UK.

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[W25, single, early 30s, MA in Value in Education, full-time]

Before W25 came to the UK, she was a lower-secondary schoolteacher for four years in her hometown near Tokyo. This means that she had taken some years to save the money needed to achieve study abroad. Moreover, as she states here, one of the reasons



why she wanted to do so was to make use of the experience in her work as a teacher. However, interestingly, her interest in this has lessened in her last seventeen-month stay in the UK away from her job, perhaps because she came to realise that she could seek a more challenging job than her previous one, or another life through moving from a more rigid and tighter society to one which is more flexible and more 'free'. (Barnlund, 1989 cited in Uyeki, 1993: 32). Also, she might find a more interesting job than becoming a teacher again through educating herself on her MA course.

Another example is W5, quoted earlier (see W5 on p. 164). Her case also demonstrates how casually women sometimes make a decision based on their interest in living abroad.

Like W25 and W5, most of these seven women indicated their interests in studying or living abroad as their important reasons for coming to the UK, even when they referred to other reasons. Moreover, in addition to these seven women, two women revealed that they had chosen to go to a postgraduate school simply as an excuse to live abroad.

There are three possible reasons why women, many of them single and aged about 30, tended to pursue their pure interest in study or living abroad. Firstly, women have little opportunity to fulfil their potential in the discriminatory labour market, which pushes women to find stimulation in foreign countries (Habu, 2000: 52). Secondly, they are tempted to run away from an uncomfortable environment in relation to marriage. Many women in their 30s face the dilemma between the desire to get married and the reality that they cannot meet a man whom they can consider marrying (Matsubara, 1988: 120), although this does not necessarily mean that they are travelling to look for foreign husbands. The pressure from other people as to their marriage becomes stronger as they get older. Thirdly, there is a norm that women have little financial responsibility for their (future) families. If they achieve their aims of studying abroad without clear purposes and return to Japan, and if they do not or cannot marry afterwards, it will be difficult for these women to establish their social position, because they have little chance to establish themselves career-wise. However, if they can marry, they have a chance to obtain financial security and establish their social position (Sakae, 1995: 50, 56). That is to say, there is more chance for women to re-integrate themselves into Japanese society with less difficulty or effort on their own than for men, because women may be able to depend on men (or sometimes on parents).

## 7.5 Reasons related to advice or influence from others

Ishizuki (1990) reports that three out of four Japanese MBA students in the US are *kigyo haken* (students sponsored by their companies). Although no statistics are available on Japanese students sponsored by their employers in the UK, the number, especially among MBA students and those studying subjects relating to business, seemed to be substantial at the University of London at the time when I conducted my research, i.e. before the Asian economic crisis in 1998.<sup>104</sup> The number of *seifu haken* (students sponsored by the ministries they work for) appeared to be considerable, too. More interestingly, it is not unusual to see family members, wives and daughters in particular, who take postgraduate courses during their husbands' or fathers' postings in the UK. These students benefit from their husbands' or fathers' companies' financial support, for example, for cost of living, travel expenses, insurance, and overseas transportation. Although these wives and daughters have to pay 'overseas students fees',<sup>105</sup> study abroad becomes more attainable for them, thanks to the support of their husbands' or fathers' employers. The influence of the involvement of Japanese companies and its government on Japanese study abroad is therefore even stronger than it appears on the surface.

There were ten students (one woman and nine men) in this study with financial support from their employer.<sup>106</sup> Most of them were *kigyo haken* except one man who was *seifu haken*.<sup>107</sup> They were either selected through public advertisements or appointed to study abroad by their employers. Moreover, there were three wives and one daughter studying during their husbands' or her father's postings or study. There were also other students who decided to study abroad motivated by the advice or

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<sup>104</sup> However, according to the report by the general consulate of Japan in London and that in Edinburgh (cited in The *Nichiei Times*, 21 April 2001), the number of Japanese people who work for private companies and sent by their employers to London and their families has decreased 7.8% in 2000 compared with the number in 1999. The number of international students, academics, and their families has decreased 5.6%, too.

<sup>105</sup> Overseas students fees apply to students from outside the UK and EU countries.

<sup>106</sup> A woman who had originally come to the UK by her company's appointment had changed her job before I interviewed her. The total number of students with employers' financial support at the time of the interviews was therefore ten.

<sup>107</sup> Scholarships held by government officials at the time of the interviews for this research were meant to be available for members of the general public who wish to study abroad. However, they were overwhelmingly and secretly given with few examinations or interviews to government officers who were 'appointed' to study abroad (The *Asahi*, 30 March 1999; The *Asahi*, 31 March 1999; The *Asahi*, 7 May 1999). Thus, the scholarships were used as a part of the budget to train government officers. I therefore regarded this student as the one sponsored by his government, not one with a scholarship.

influence of other people.

I shall now investigate the involvement of employers and other people in students' decisions to study abroad, to uncover gender aspects.

**Table 7-5 The frequency with which students mentioned reasons related to advice or influence from others**

Area	Reason	No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total
		Women	Men	
(4) Advice or influence from others	Came with husband or father on business or studying abroad	4	0	4
	Recommended and advised by others	3	3	6
	Applied for my company's study abroad programme and was chosen	1	8	9
	Company or ministry's appointment	1	2	3
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	9	13	22
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	8	10	18
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reason in this area</b>	17	17	34
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

Table 7-5 shows that the number of mentions concerning the advice or influence from others made by men exceeds that made by women. This is mainly because the absolute number of men sponsored by their employers was much larger than that of women, and all of these raised the fact that they were studying abroad with financial support from their employers as one of their reasons for studying abroad.

Furthermore, four women originally came to the UK to accompany their husbands or fathers, and all of them raised this opportunity as their main reason for their deciding to take a postgraduate course. W9 is an example (also see W18 on p. 171). Many of the students who did not mention reasons in this area were therefore those who had decided to study abroad with no involvement of employers.

I shall now examine women who came to the UK to accompany their husbands or father. W9 was the wife of a banker who was appointed to work for his bank's London office for a few years. Although she was a housewife in Japan, she took a one-year

course at a Japanese private institution in London to be a qualified teacher of Japanese language. She was teaching Japanese at a school in London on a part-time basis, as well as taking an MA course for further career advancement on part-time basis.

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[W9, married, late 30s, MA in Applied Linguistics, part-time]

The last sentence suggests that her husband's relocation helped her to broaden her life by being a Japanese language teacher, but equally that this was secondary to being a wife and his career. The other three women (two wives and one single daughter) who accompanied their husbands or father showed the same tendency as W9, in that if their husbands or father had not come to this country for work or study, they might not have taken postgraduate courses abroad. Thus, these wives' or daughter's studying abroad can be also described as 'me-too' study abroad.

In contrast, no men came to the UK to accompany their family members.<sup>108</sup>

Three women and three men mentioned that recommendations or advice from other people encouraged them to study abroad. However, there were differences between men and women as to who recommended and advised them. For women, friends and parents advised them to take up postgraduate studies; no one was encouraged by academic staff. According to Moses (1990: 18), as women get older, active encouragement from academic staff to go on to postgraduate studies becomes less, this might be also a factor here. For example, a woman whose mother was a university lecturer in Japan stated:

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<sup>108</sup> As for his research participants, postgraduate students studying in an American university, Verthelyi (1995: 391) also states that '[a]ll spouses were female because male spouses accompanying international female students are a rare exception'.

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[W22, single, late 30s, MA in Fine Art Administration and Curatorship, full-time]

As a whole, it can be said that women tended to have advice from those who were close to them.

In contrast, colleagues and academic staff were more important in giving advice in the case of men. For example, M37 mentioned his teacher's advice as one of the reasons, although he had once thought about taking a PhD course in Japan. He said:

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[M37, single, late 20s, PhD in Geography (Economics), full-time]

As for other men, one was a medical doctor at a university hospital and advised by his senior that he should take a postdoctoral course abroad as a step to establish himself. The other was studying abroad with financial support from his employer, having passed all his company's examinations for its study abroad programme. According to him, one of his senior colleagues who had studied abroad through the programme several years ago, 'forced' him to take advantage of the programme by secretly applying for him, because he himself was so satisfied with what he had done with the programme.

The gender difference implies that while study abroad is discussed and negotiated in the private sphere among women, it is integrated into the public sphere in the case of men. It is also interesting to know why study abroad is recommended so strongly:

foreign degrees as well as experience have begun to be widely appreciated in Japan,<sup>109</sup> even though there may still be prejudice against or criticism of study abroad (see Section 2.2.2 for further discussion).

As mentioned earlier, the difference in the number of mentions made by men and women - 9:1 - wholly reflected the difference in the actual number of men and women who had the financial support of their employers. The numerical difference implies two things. Firstly, the numbers are also equal to the absolute numbers of students who were sponsored by their employers. This may imply that it is still an almost unattainable objective for many women to be sent abroad by their employers, as the only woman, a banker, said:

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[W17, single, early 30s, MBA, full-time]

She asserts the reason that she was once turned down because of being a woman and being young, but we cannot sure if that was the real reason. Nonetheless, we are convinced that she implies the atmosphere of her bank by saying so.

Secondly, it was considered an important reason for these people across both genders that they applied successfully for their companies' overseas study programmes, because none failed to mention it. Moreover, interestingly enough, all of them put more weight on this factor than others by mentioning it first, as can be seen in the comments shown below. M45, for example, was an employee of one of the major insurance companies in Japan, and was accompanied by his wife and two children. He stated:

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<sup>109</sup> Johnson (1997:33) also finds a similar change in the Netherlands.

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[M45, married with two children, early 30s, MBA, full-time]

Moreover, four other students (one woman and three men) also demonstrated their enthusiasm about utilising their experience of study abroad in their workplace when they returned to Japan. However, two students (both women) seemed to be regarding their study abroad as 'a break' from their work, and two (both men) saw their study abroad as 'the chance to qualify themselves for job change'. For example, M34 was an employee of the same insurance company as M45, although they had worked for different departments. He stated:

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[M34, single, early 30s, MSc in Industrial Relations and Personal Management, full-time]

What is interesting here is not only that he mentioned the fact that he had been chosen by his company but also that he was honest enough to say that he was not interested in serious study. He saw study abroad as fun or a break, despite giving a plausible answer at the beginning. His comment could therefore mean that he was not keen on studying seriously, yet he was proud of having been chosen by his employers.

Many of these students with financial support from their employers, including M45 and M34, *applied* for their companies' programmes. This means that they took action to obtain the chance to study abroad. However, there seems to be a strong possibility that they would not have studied abroad if such a programme had not existed at their workplaces. This possibility is, for example, clearly demonstrated in M43's comment, referred to earlier in this chapter (see M43 on p. 172) and in M34 quoted above.

Furthermore, it is natural that any academic motive which these employees had was secondary, if we take into account that they took action in a protected environment: they did not have to risk their jobs to study.

## **7.6 Reasons related to finance**

Studying in the UK as international students can cost a lot. For example, the tuition fees, called 'overseas students fees', for international postgraduate students at the Institute of Education in most full-time MA courses for 1997/98 were £6,582, while those for home students, called 'home students fees', was £2,490 (Institute of Education, 1997: C25).<sup>110</sup> The fees for most part-time MA courses were £1,245 for both international and home students, although as discussed earlier (see Section 2.5.3), most international students tend to study full-time. In addition to these tuition fees, single students, for example, need to be ready to spend £7,500 to £8,000 per year on living expenses (University of London Accommodation Office, 2000: 8).

The following Table 7-6 shows that although both women and men referred to the influence of financial reasons on their decisions, men tended to be more money-sensitive than women.

Only a few students referred to the influence of their financial situation on their decisions. Underlying this is the fact that all the students in this study had managed to find enough money to study abroad, unlike those who had to give up their hopes of doing so.

Nevertheless, a slight gender difference was recognisable among the students who mentioned the influence of financial circumstances. While women tended to refer to the permission of their parents, which had a close link with 'financial help', obtained from them, men implied that they faced a more serious and challenging situation when seeking to study abroad. All of the mentions made by men were related to their tight budgets.

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<sup>110</sup> The tuition fee has been increased every year. The overseas student fee for most full-time MA students for 2001/2002 was £7,232 at the Institute, while the fee for home/European Union students was £2,740 (Institute of Education, 2001: 78). The fee for part-time MA students for the same academic year was £1,374, regardless of international or home students.



**Table 7-6 The frequency with which students mentioned reasons related to finance**

Area	Reason	No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total
		Women	Men	
(5) Finance	Had support for study abroad from my parents	2	0	2
	Possible to complete MA course in one year in the UK which helps me financially	1	1	2
	Managed to obtain a scholarship	0	3	3
	Tuition fees were more reasonable in the UK than in the US	0	2	2
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	3	6	9
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	3	5	8
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reason in this area</b>	22	25	47
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* A man mentioned two reasons.

There were five mentions in relation to 'Managed to obtain a grant' and 'Tuition fees are more reasonable in the UK than in the US', all given by men. It is noteworthy that three out of these five students were either working part-time or receiving scholarships, and the remaining two were working part-time in the UK as well as on scholarships. The following is an example of an MPhil/PhD student working on a part-time basis and with a scholarship given by the British Council.

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This student was working part-time for an American consulting firm based in London, making use of his working experience in a similar field in Japan. I asked him why he

was working as well as studying.

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It is clear from his comment that obtaining a scholarship was the first step he had to take in order to study abroad, and there was little chance for him to choose the country because of his tight budget. He also *had to* work in order to remain on his course.<sup>111</sup>

M40 also described how financial reasons affected his decision on where to study.

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*America for two years. I was a realist.*

[M40, married with a child, early 30s, PhD in Cultural Studies, full-time]

All of these men regarded financial reasons as their most important reasons for studying abroad: three men could realise their aim to do so because they received scholarships, and two men because tuition fees were more reasonable in the UK than in the US.<sup>112</sup> Otherwise, there would have been little chance for them to realise their hopes

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<sup>111</sup> I have heard, however, that he had to return to Japan in the middle of his second year, one year after I interviewed him, because of lack of money. There was also another man who participated in this study and had to withdraw in the middle of his course. He was also an MPhil/PhD student.

<sup>112</sup> M32 mentioned both, so the number of respondents was four.

of studying abroad.

Interestingly enough, no women described any financial obstacles they encountered during the process of making decisions. Rather, more women referred to their fortunate position in being financially supported by their parents. However, these women often had to ask their parents' permission to study abroad, and tended to suffer from a sense of guilt towards their parents during their course as discussed earlier (see Section 6.2). Moreover, only two women had scholarships compared to six men. This may suggest the women's lack of effort to be financially independent from their parents, although there are also claims that women tend to have less chances getting scholarships than men (Goldsmith and Shawcross, 1985: 16-17).<sup>113</sup>

## **7.7 Other reasons**

There were many other reasons that could not be categorised under any main areas. However, as mentioned earlier, these reasons should not be made light of, because many of them appear to be related to, and to help us understand, reasons considered in other areas.

There were 18 mentions of 12 reasons; the numbers of mentions for these reasons are too small to indicate any significant gender difference. Nevertheless, some reasons were related to each other. Some were to do with finding something attractive which respondents could not find in Japan. Others were contributed by respondents who saw postgraduate schools in the UK as alternatives to those in Japan or the US.

As far as the former group of reasons is concerned, some of them mentioned here give useful hints for better understanding of the reasons that we have already examined. In particular, mentions related to relationship problems and the reluctance to stay in Japan, i.e. desire to the escape from Japan, made by women are helpful for better understanding of women students who decided to study abroad because of their interest in living abroad (see Section 7.4). That is to say, Japanese society appears to be more open-minded towards women's than men's study abroad: more women than men can study abroad with fewer formal reasons or less difficulty because there is less pressure

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<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, there is also a case like the College Women's Association of Japan (CWAJ) that provides only women with scholarships.

on women to make their own living.

**Table 7-7 The frequency with which students mentioned other reasons for studying abroad**

Area	Reason	No. of respondents mentioning each reason		Total
		Women	Men	
<b>(6) Other reasons</b>	Exclusiveness and inflexible system of postgraduate schools in Japan	3	2	5
	Had spare time	1	1	2
	Stimulated by my husband who was studying	1	0	1
	As a result of relationship problems	1	0	1
	Was not ready to work after finishing BA in Japan	1	0	1
	Cannot speak any other language than Japanese and English	1	0	1
	Did not want to be in Japan	1	0	1
	Without a clear purpose	0	2	2
	Was not interested in going to an art university in Japan	0	1	1
	The system makes it hard to get a PhD degree in Japan	0	1	1
	Applied for a PhD course in Japan, but failed	0	1	1
	Applied for a university in the US, but failed	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	9	9	18
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	8	6	14
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any reason in this area</b>	17	21	38
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several reasons.

As for the students who saw postgraduate schools in the UK as alternatives to those in Japan or in the US, they consisted of two sub-groups: respondents who avoided Japanese postgraduate schools because of the system's inflexibility (Ishizuki, 1990: 4; Regur, 1990: 22), and those who had not been accepted by postgraduate schools which they wanted to attend in other countries. Although Section 7.5, the section on advice or influence from others, on the negative side of Japanese postgraduate schools (see M37 on P. 182), this came to light in this section again. The problems raised by respondents

were in relation to entrance requirements: many Japanese postgraduate schools seldom accept applications from those who studied different subjects at undergraduate level, and there is no bridging course similar to British diploma courses for them.

Examining the mentions dealt with here clarifies two findings. One is that people do not always decide to take postgraduate courses because they are interested in study. They may study abroad because they cannot find any better options. The other is that postgraduate schools offer a range of international alternatives, and people have more options than ever before as access to foreign postgraduate schools gets easier (Johnson, 1997).

## **7.8 Summary and discussion**

It has become clear that Japanese postgraduate students finally decide to study at the University of London after having considered, and been influenced by, many concerns. Moreover, it is clear that study-related and non-study-related reasons often interact in complex ways among individuals, with different weight for each. As a whole, men students' reasons were mainly concentrated on those related to study and careers, which showed consistency between the number and the content of mentions. In contrast, women students' reasons were concentrated on living abroad as well as study and careers. Moreover, although women mentioned more reasons related to study than any other, these reasons were sometimes only additional to other more important ones, notably their interest in living abroad itself.

Reasons in relation to study mentioned by respondents were divided into two sub-areas - 'General interest in study', which tended to be mentioned more by women, and 'Specific interest in study' mentioned more by men. The gender difference was mainly due to the difference in whether or not respondents came to the UK initially in order to take postgraduate courses: generally speaking, more women than men tended to come to the UK at a younger age, typically to study language, and then seemed to decide to go on to postgraduate studies.

The larger number of women respondents who made mentions categorised into 'General interest in study', and the cases of wives or daughters' 'me-too' study abroad imply that study abroad has become a more casually selected option for women than for

men. The tendency is clear from the fact that the proportion of Japanese women students at diploma and MA levels (but not doctoral level) is much high, compared with that of international women students (see Table 2-5). Moreover, taking into account the tendency for women in developed countries to study abroad, even though the courses they are taking are available in their home countries, it is clear that they may study abroad seeking something additional which stimulates them and fulfils their desires (Goldsmith and Shawcross, 1985: 16). Considering the aspects discussed so far, it can be said that for some women studying abroad, including postgraduate level, has become closer to 'tourism' with its aspects of 'adventure', 'exploration' and intellectual challenge, and the object of consumption rather than investment.

In contrast to the tendency seen among these women, men are more likely to see, or at least explain their study abroad as something that requires a more serious consideration. Although there were both women and men who were clear about what, where, and/or under whom they had wanted to study prior to their departure for the UK, more men were clearer about what they expected and the benefit of postgraduate studies in the UK than their women counterparts, especially in relation to the subjects they studied.

Furthermore, as various studies have already pointed out, more men than women tend to choose their subjects in relation to their careers (Allen, 1990: 13-14; Wilson, 1991). This tendency was seen in this study, too. In addition, this study has also demonstrated that more men than women were enthusiastic about studying a subject that was more advanced in the UK than in Japan, and making use of their study in their careers (see Chapter 8).

Evidently, some Japanese students come to the UK and work in fields that are more advanced than in Japan. The tendency might be called 'value-added study abroad', a term used by Ebuchi (1990) to describe study abroad when education which can only be obtained there is sought, or for cultural experience after completing degree courses in students' home countries. As regards Japan's educational position, it is clear that education in the UK plays a complementary role, as it does for other countries, especially developing countries and as it clearly did for Japan in the late 19th century (Schwantes, 1955: 194-195; Useem and Useem, 1955: 12; Williams, 1983: 21; Bhalalusesa, 1998: 26). This kind of study could be described as 'dependence-type study abroad', which Ebuchi (1990) defines as occurring when a country tries to meet

its needs by depending on the education of other countries, as opposed to 'value-added study abroad'. Ebuchi also defines the type of study abroad by the geographical area which the students come from. Students who come from the south and go to the north tend to participate in 'dependence-type study abroad', while students going from the north to the north tend to take part in 'value-added study abroad'.<sup>114</sup> However, if one examines the characteristics of Japanese postgraduate students, their study abroad appears to include both aspects, and whether it is 'value-added' or 'dependence-type' seems to depend on which perspective we use, i.e. from the student or state perspective.

Some studies report that the most common objectives among international students are career-related - for instance, 'obtaining professional knowledge and skills' (Uyeki, 1993: 24), and 'study abroad will help my career/study advance' (Yajima, 1986: 239). Other studies also report career-related reasons as relatively common (Regur, 1990: 22). However, few studies have investigated further, partly because they rely on questionnaires, and also because they do not examine gender differences. For example, Regur's (1990: 22) conclusion that '[Japanese] people who are considering taking postgraduate courses in the US have very practical reasons for it', is based on the results of a questionnaire on objectives of study abroad conducted by the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission. Considering the findings in my study that people tend to have more than one objective - some practical, others not - for studying abroad and that these interact in a complex way, the objectives found by the Commission appear to be extremely restricted and oversimplified. Regur's analysis therefore also seems very shallow.

The Japan-U.S. Education Commission's respondents were also skewed towards those who were 'considering taking postgraduate courses' in the US at the time of the research. My study, on the other hand, investigated not only those who were initially interested in taking postgraduate courses, but also those who drifted into postgraduate courses and 'me-too' groups, using in-depth semi-structured interviews and it examined gender differences. As a result, it became clear that although advancement of careers was the most commonly mentioned reason by both women and men, some who mentioned this interest, often women, were not very serious about it in reality.

I do not mean to assert that these students were insincere, nor that the other studies

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<sup>114</sup> Kitamura (1990) states that Ebuchi (1990) named these two kinds of study abroad.

mentioned above are wrong. I would rather say that many of these students who verbalised their interest in career development but showed little interest in it in reality were honest to themselves and to me. They were probably interested in career advancement to some extent, even if not much, which is why they mentioned it. It is rather a matter of the different weight which individuals put on their various reasons. Mentioning interest in career-development does not necessarily mean that it is very important to the respondents.

Furthermore, I also would like to emphasise the importance of recognising the diversity of career-related reasons mentioned by respondents, in accordance with individual as well as gender differences. While many men were career-minded, with a strong interest in career advancement, the women could be divided into two groups. One group was career-minded, like most men, and the other exhibited little interest in careers. In this respect, it can be said that this finding parallels the finding in Chapter 6 which clarified that more men than women were concerned about their careers.

Although the number of mentions was never large, it became clear that some women and men decided to study abroad because they were tired of their employment, bored, or had reached a dead end in it. I have already mentioned that study abroad may be seen as an 'oasis' in a new environment for those who are exhausted by their jobs. However, there seems to be another role, which study abroad plays for them. It is a 'consolation prize'. Japanese society is hard for those who fail to enter the elite, or who abandon that status, because there is little chance for them to gain or regain such a position. Many Japanese prestigious companies recruit only new graduates from best universities (see also Section 2.3.1). If they cannot enter the circle at the first stage, they are treated as 'outsiders'. Once they leave it, they are labelled as 'dropouts'.<sup>115</sup>

Ideally, Japanese postgraduate schools should provide these people with a chance to reset their lives. However, in reality there is little opportunity to enter them because of the rigidity and exclusivity of the Japanese educational system (Ishizuki, 1989: 68; Regur, 1990: 22; Abe, 1996: 267), as discussed earlier (see W37 on p. 182).<sup>116</sup> Also

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<sup>115</sup> The situation has been gradually changing, though, because of prolonged recession: leaving a company and establishing privately-owned business has become more popular and acknowledged than ever before.

<sup>116</sup> A good example of the difference in flexibility between a Japanese postgraduate school and a UK school is the comment by W15. She said that it was impossible for her who had studied biology for her BA to study medicine at postgraduate level, but it was possible for her to do so in the UK. Some Japanese postgraduate schools require not only knowledge in a specialty but also a good command of



Japanese postgraduate schools rarely award PhD degrees in the social sciences and the humanities (Yamamoto, 1995: 122), which motivates capable nationals to leave for foreign countries to obtain such a degree. Moreover, the inferior quality of Japanese higher educational institutions has been deplored by respondents in this study and by many scholars inside and outside Japan (Umakoshi, 1990: 82; Uyeki, 1993: 36; Yamamoto, 1995: 122, 125; Newstpuny, 1999; The Asahi Newspaper, 15 June 2000). Obtaining a degree at a prestigious foreign postgraduate school - 'an outside route' - is a consolation prize and can be indeed advantageous: it may reset the student's life course with prospects *outside* the world of Japanese prestigious companies, for example, and open up opportunities in foreign companies or universities. In this respect, too, foreign postgraduate education plays a complementary role for Japan. It is possible largely thanks to foreign postgraduate schools' readiness to accept people with ability.

Reasons related to living abroad showed a striking difference between genders. Many women tended to present their strong and long-cherished interest in living abroad, while only a few men referred to this, and only as an 'additional' reason to the more salient reasons.

According to Goldsmith and Shawcross (1985: 16), women from the 'developed' countries tend to give 'cultural' reason for studying in the UK, such as 'Teaching in English', 'Experience and travel', and 'Liking the UK', and their analysis appears to be applicable to the tendency found in this study. *OL no Kaigaihakusho* (The white paper on working women's thoughts on foreign countries) by Recruit Co. Ltd., one of the major Japanese publishing companies (cited in Yuzuki, 1999: 385), further suggests the justifiability of Goldsmith and Shawcross' study: more than a half of the respondents, 103 out of 196 women aged 18-35, were interested in study abroad. Moreover, another questionnaire conducted with 288 working women by the same company reports that their top five reasons and purposes were 'To learn English' (26.8%), 'Want to learn things which I can only learn on the spot' (19.8%), 'Want to live abroad for a while once in my life' (17.4%), 'Have a long-cherished desire to study abroad' (9.7%), and 'Want to have a chance of working abroad through studying abroad' (8.7%). It is clear

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English and other language in the entrance examination. The inflexibility of the entrance requirements seems to be one of the reasons why graduate students enrolments in Japan are much lower than in other major countries. As seen in footnote 22 on p. 26, graduate student enrolments were extremely low in Japan. The corresponding figures were 15 per cent in the United States in 1987, 33.5 per cent in the United Kingdom in 1987, and 20.7 per cent in France in 1988 (Yamamoto, 1995:131).

from this paper that Japanese young women tend to see studying abroad as stimulating. Also, they want to study abroad not for the sake of advanced study but to experience a different culture, living abroad itself, and to learn a language. This finding agrees also with the one in Section 7.2 concerning reasons related to study, which revealed that many women who verbalised their interest in advancing career through studying abroad were actually more interested in living abroad itself. However, studying abroad by those women based on the decision to take postgraduate courses for these reasons, and with little consideration for their future career, is indeed risky. This is well explained by Shinichi Yamamoto, a professor at the University of Tsukuba:

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As Yamamoto's statement suggests, women who go to postgraduate courses abroad are definitely also 'adventurous'. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, Japanese society does not always welcome people who come back from studying abroad. Therefore, deciding to study abroad just because of strong interest in living abroad, as was often seen among women in this study, is certainly adventurous or risk-taking. In contrast, men seemed to know that studying abroad based on interest in living or studying abroad was too risky for them, because many had to prepare to be financially responsible for their own lives and often for their families as well. This is why fewer men than women study abroad, unless sent by their employers.

Women's studying abroad tends to remain a matter negotiated in the private sphere and to be secondary to their husbands' or fathers' decisions. In contrast, for men this tended to be integrated in their career development, and, therefore, negotiated in the public sphere and primarily their own decision. The difference appears to reflect the difference of the roles which women and men play in the society. The tendency was conspicuous because the involvement of Japanese companies or the government with men students was apparent, while that in women students was little or indirect.

Ishizuki (1990) sees study abroad in earlier times as combining the aims of

conveying civilisation from a more developed country than Japan, and of consuming, in the sense that some people study abroad to improve themselves. The government in the 19th Century indeed had a strong expectation that the people dispatched by them would contribute Japan's educational and economic advancement through conveying new knowledge and advanced skills, when they returned to Japan (Schwantes, 1955: 197; Burks, 1985: 254; Yamazaki, 1988: 28; Ishizuki, 1990: 4). In contrast, he sees today's study abroad as an investment because those who do so tend to have more concrete reasons than ever before. However, which students does he mean? It is certainly questionable whether he is correct in seeing companies' sending their employees to study abroad as a pure investment (Ishizuki, 1990: 6).

Many students in my study, overwhelmingly men, were sponsored by their employers, i.e. Japanese companies or a ministry. These may appear at first like the elite of earlier times: they share a commonality with those who were carefully chosen as able people to study in foreign higher educational institutions supported by Japanese government. Moreover, their study abroad may appear to be aimed at conveying knowledge and advanced skills from other countries, often the US and the UK, to Japan; and certainly their employers seem to be expecting them to do this. However, the reality seems to be very different from that of the 19th century. The students seem to be more interested in the individual benefit which they can obtain through study abroad than in their companies' benefit. In Regur's study (1990: 23) of Japanese MBA students in the US, most of whom were sponsored by their employers, slightly more students appear interested in leaving their workplace in the future - changing their workplace (21%) or establishing their own business (9%) - than in seeking career advancement in their current workplaces (22%).<sup>117</sup> Their thoughts are well explained by an Indian student, quoted in Useem and Useem (1955: 10) who claims that individuals rarely think that they study abroad for the benefit of their state, and are more likely to be interested in their own benefit. In the same way, few employees in this study who were sponsored by their employers appeared to see their study abroad as primarily for the benefit of their employers. Other employees saw their study abroad as merely 'a break' from their work. Some others were planning to leave their companies, and hoping to work for foreign companies in Japan through empowering themselves by leaning

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<sup>117</sup> Regur interprets her study differently, however, paying most attention to the highest proportion response, viz 'the desire to seek career advancement in their current workplaces'.

English as well as getting MBA degrees. Ironically, 'investment', as defined by Ishizuki was in fact carried out for these employees' own benefit under the guise of 'investment' for their employers.

Moreover, it is doubtful whether Japanese companies which send their employees to foreign countries are really interested in utilising them once they return to Japan (Regur, 1990: 23). This was well explained by one of the women respondents, a banker, in this study.

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[W17, single, early 30s, MBA, full-time]

It is often said that the reason why people who have studied abroad with financial support from their employers tend to leave them shortly after they return to Japan is that their experience of studying abroad is not valued. They also have to be careful not to talk about their experience abroad too much, because their colleagues are not always happy to hear about it (White, 1988: 32).

Furthermore, I have further doubts about Ishizuki (1990: 6)'s view that individuals study abroad as an investment for themselves. I rather think that study abroad for self-improvement or for consumption, which Ishizuki sees as typical of earlier times, is persistent today, certainly among women. A good example is the popularity of studying abroad to learn English (Yajima, 1986: 239; Yuzuki, 1999: 385). Young women seem to do this for their own interests, and wives, who do 'me-too' study abroad, seem to enjoy intellectual challenge. This kind of study abroad is the object of consumption. If, however, there are some who see their study abroad as investment for future, it is still probable that in reality the true motives are more to do with consumption than investment. In this case, there is no clear-cut line between the two cases. Thus, if Ishizuki's opinion is justifiable, it is much more likely to be true for men, who tend more than women to see their study abroad as a step to advance their career.

As for Japanese students in the US, Regur reports the impression of Japanese

students held by American international students' counsellors:

International students from other countries such as China and Africa have to overcome many serious difficulties, and suffer from serious financial difficulties and personal issues. In contrast, Japanese students appear to be indifferent to all of those issues. As a whole, Japanese students are financially strong, and face fewer problems academically [in comparison with international students from other countries]. (Regur, 1990: 23)

If Japanese students are compared with Chinese or African students as groups, it is possible that the Japanese appear to have few problems, especially to do with finance. My study of Japanese postgraduate students in the UK (more specifically in London) found that many of the financial issues which respondents mentioned were rather 'financially associated' problems - feelings of guilt towards their parents who financially supported them in the case of women, and feelings of inferiority towards their friends who earned money in the case of men - rather than whether or not they had enough money to continue their studies. This implies that the Japanese encounter fewer financial difficulties than other international students (see also Section 6.2).

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Japanese students are indifferent to financial difficulties or that none of them suffer from any related issues. For example, two men, both PhD students, who had to leave their courses in the middle because they could no longer finance themselves (See footnote 111). It also became clear that while women had little financial concern, men tended to encounter constraints in the process of making their decisions to study abroad: some men had to limit their choice of destination due to the cost of studying abroad. Furthermore, Yajima (1986: 239) reports that 25% (four out of 17 men and five out of 19 women) of his respondents, former Japanese Rotary Foundation scholars, answered that they would have given up their studying abroad if they could not have obtained its scholarships. 25% is not a small proportion. This indicates that many Japanese people depend on scholarships, even though the number of scholarships is extremely limited and competition is high in obtaining one. In this respect, the Japanese who have reached the stage of achieving the goal of studying abroad, or those who can realistically plan to do so, appear to be relatively free from financial difficulties as Regur reports. We must, however, remember that many other Japanese people cannot reach this stage, and some struggle to

survive financially, even after they have started to study abroad. The struggle can be hard, especially among PhD students whose courses last much longer than MA students and who cannot fully cover their tuition fee, even if they do obtain scholarships; many of which last only one year.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, a few women exhibited their strong dependence on their parents' financial support during the process of deciding to study abroad. When it is taken into account that more women than men depended on their parents financially during their study abroad (see Section 2.7 in Appendix III-1 for more detail), it is obvious that many women could not have realised their aims of studying abroad or staying on their courses without such support. In this respect, the above-mentioned *OL no Kaigaihakusho* reports a very different result: 83.1% of working women aged 18-35 years old in the study answered that they would pay the costs from their savings, if they studied abroad, and only 3.7% answered that they would rely on their parents financially. What is, however, interesting about the report is that few were ready to spend more than ¥2,000,000 (approx. £11,100: £1 = ¥180 as of April 2001) (Yuzuki, 1999: 386), which would not cover the cost of postgraduate studies in the UK, and certainly not in the US.

Comparing my study and the paper shows that studying abroad at postgraduate level (and probably on any degree course) is very much a financial and intellectual 'extravagance' for many working women. Students able to study abroad with financial support from others, often parents, were therefore fortunate, and might even be regarded by others, including those working women, as 'spoiled'.

Although the number was small, the women who decided to study abroad because of relationship difficulties and reluctance to remain in Japan provided additional pointers to the greater open-mindedness of the society towards women studying abroad than men. In relation to this point, many studies indicate that women use study abroad as a useful excuse to escape from hardship or dilemmas experienced in Japan (Matsubara, 1988: 120; Tanabe, 1989: 67-68; Habu, 2000: 52). These studies seek the cause of hardships for women in the pressure towards marriage and the limited opportunities for promotion in the labour market. Sakae, for example, discusses the link between women's study abroad and the open-mindedness of society, as follows:

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studying abroad, they can do it. (Sakae, 1995: 51)

There were two women who were both in their early 30s mentioned that they had been forced by their parents to have arranged meetings with a view to marriage when they were in their late 20s, although neither of them mentioned this among their reasons for studying abroad. One of them revealed that she had experienced nearly 40 arranged meetings because her mother was so eager for her to get married 'in time', although she ended up meeting no one suitable. It was impressive that she said that she was enjoying the freedom in her life in London, which she could never otherwise have experienced.

It is also clear that higher education has become internationally accessible: foreign education plays the role of an 'alternative' to education at home. There is little reason to confine oneself to higher educational institutions at home, especially at postgraduate level, if one can afford to study abroad and is not afraid of prejudice that may be encountered from other Japanese people on returning to Japan. Six out of 52 respondents (12%) in this study complained about Japanese postgraduate schools, which is a substantial minority. It is time for the Japanese to grasp the present situation of higher education, including postgraduate schools, and to make the necessary changes, thus reflecting the complaints these students have.

## 7.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to investigate Japanese students' reasons for studying abroad as deeply as possible from a gender perspective, and to examine how the reasons interact. As a result, it became clear that issues that had been reported as common to both genders were not always so. Moreover, it also became clear that each student had more than one reason, often several, for their decisions to study abroad, and these reasons interacted with each other in complicated ways because of their different weighting.

First of all, as already reported elsewhere (Jiang, 1994: 306, Regur, 1990: 4), many students stated that when they decided to study abroad, they took into account their future career. This study also found that men tended to view their study abroad as a mere means to advance their career. The choice of subject, and reasons for that choice, were therefore crucial concerns for many of them. However, many fewer women were serious about advancing their career through studying abroad, whereas many men were desperate to do so. Instead, women who saw their study abroad itself as their purpose or goal, fulfilling a long-cherished hope to live and study abroad and offering intellectual challenge, were prominent. The gender difference was therefore very much related to the balance between the weight they put on career advancement and that placed on other reasons.

As for the advice or influence from others on studying abroad, too, for women, this had little to do with careers, while for men it was strongly related to their careers or study. For example, study abroad for women was often negotiated in the private as a private issue, and carried out in a secondary position as a wife, or father's daughter. In contrast, the decision to study abroad for men was often integrated in the workplace - a public sphere - as a step for career advancement, which was the deciding factor. This private and public division of reasons for study abroad in accordance with gender appeared to be a reflection of the classical Japanese social structure: women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere. Study abroad for women was often quite separate from career advancement.

Underlying the gender difference in the relation between career and study abroad, it is apparent that women were often more light-hearted about study abroad, even at postgraduate level, than men: the purpose of women's studying abroad is not always serious but may be close to tourism or consumption. The situation is well illustrated by the fact that many women drifted into postgraduate studies after coming to the UK for other reasons, for example, going to a language school or to accompany their husband or father. Such phenomena have been factors in encouraging more women to study abroad. Women can study abroad more than men because they feel there is much less need to work to make their own living or to support their (future) families. Society does not expect women to be financially independent; they are regarded as people who will depend on their future husbands sooner or later, to a greater or lesser degree. This tendency also suggests that men cannot easily study abroad. Even if they do so, they



tend to push themselves to complete their courses and find a job as soon as possible. 'The gap year' that is often appreciated in the UK as a period in which young people work and travel abroad before they enter universities, or get a job in order to expand their horizons, seems to be hardly appreciated in Japan as an option for men. Rather, it is believed that men had better not have any 'gaps' in their lives. The only men who were exceptions to this, showing their relaxation and even seeing their study abroad as 'a break', were those with financial support from their employers. The reason for their attitude appeared to be that unlike other men, they had already secured jobs that they could return to after completing their courses.

Secondly, the other reason that demonstrated an interesting gender difference concerned finance. It became clear that more men than women suffered from being on a tight budget, because more of them tried to be financially independent from their parents. As we have already discussed, from the issues facing Japanese postgraduate students in the previous chapter, we know this anxiety over budget does not disappear even after starting their studies abroad, especially for men PhD students.

Thirdly, the only commonality to both genders clearly seen in this study was that some students, both women and men, tried to reset their lives through studying abroad. Some saw study abroad as a means to refresh themselves from both physical and emotional fatigue from their previous work in Japan. Others tried to use their study abroad as a way of advancing their position, in comparison with the elite who climbed the ladder to success smoothly within the Japanese social structure. This, they hoped to achieve by becoming strong enough to compete from outside the structure on equal terms with these people, through obtaining advanced knowledge in the UK. They had to take this 'outside route' to strengthen them intellectually and occupationally because the system of Japanese postgraduate schools was so rigid that they could not enter these schools. In the case of men, there were also some who had to take the route because the subjects they wanted to study were not available in Japan.

The Japanese government has been so enthusiastic about achieving its goal of receiving 100,000 international students by the early 21st century that they appear to be offering too many services to attract international students (see Section 2.4 for further discussion). For instance, the government 'gives' ¥150,000 (approx. £830: £1 = ¥180 as of April 2001) to privately funded students from abroad who decide to study in Japan (The Asahi, 17 November 1999). It is, however, self-evident that international students

will not be attracted to Japanese higher educational institutions, which the Japanese themselves are not happy with. It is time for Japan not only to try to internationalise their higher education through the use of international students, but also to reform it by listening the 'voices' of their own nationals.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Thoughts on the post-course period**

In this chapter, I shall first present an overview of the occupations and fields of work aspired to by the students, as well as the reasons why they were interested in these occupations. The clarity with which students stated their aspiration can be regarded as a measure of how seriously they were committed to the occupations. I will then go on to explore Japanese postgraduate students' long term thoughts on marriage, finance, children, parents, age, and other topics, because these serve as indicators of serious intent or enthusiasm students have about establishing themselves in a career. I will foreground gender in this analysis. This analysis will contribute to an understanding of the gendering of the issues mentioned by Japanese postgraduate students during the period of their study in London.

#### **8.1 Occupations and field of work aspired to by students**

The following Table 8-1 shows the occupations and fields of work which students mentioned as those they hoped to enter after they had completed their studies.

While the occupational categories of education/research, (international) organisation, art, and business are evenly represented in the responses of women and men, the others and the return to workplace showed contrasts in gender.

Looking first at the group of students in general, the occupations mentioned could be categorised into five groups. 20 women mentioned 15 kinds of occupations, whilst 16 men referred to 11.

It is also worth noting that four women were not sure what they wanted to do after completing their courses: this may be related to Yajima's finding on the life course of former Japanese students on Rotary Foundation Scholarships. He states:

First, as for men, the effect of their study abroad is seen in social and extrinsic aspects such as their study, research and career. For women, conversely, (...) the effectiveness

**Table 8-1 Occupations/field of work aspired to by students**

Student category	Occupational Area	Occupational Category	No. of respondents mentioning each occupation		Total
			Women	Men	
(a) Students in general	(1) Education/ research	Lecturer/researcher at university	9	9	18
		Researcher at a think-tank/research institution	2	4	6
		Primary school teacher	1	1	2
		English teacher at a private prep school	0	1	1
		Japanese teacher (freelance)	1	0	1
		Developing educational material	1	0	1
		No. of mentions*	14	15	29
		No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area	10	12	22
	(2) (International) Organisation	Civil servant in international organisation (EU, UN etc.)	0	2	2
		Consultant in an international organisation/ cultural exchange organisation	1	1	2
		Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	1	0	1
		No. of mentions*	2	3	5
		No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area	2	2	4
	(3) Art	Curator/art administrator	1	0	1
		Painter	0	1	1
		Opera singer	1	0	1
		No. of mentions	2	1	3
		No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area	2	1	3
	(4) Business	Run own business	1	1	2
		Work for a manufacturer	1	0	1
		Business consultant	0	1	1
		No. of mentions	2	2	4
		No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area	2	2	4

(a) Students in general	(5) Others	Translator	2	1	3
		Writer	1	1	2
		Ministry of foreign affairs (clerical work)	1	0	1
		Housewife	1	0	1
		No. of mentions*	5	2	7
		No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area	4	2	6
	No. of mentions*		25	23	48
	No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area		20	16	36
(b) Students on temporary leave from work**	(6) Return to workplace	Resume working for employer/at workplace as before and apply for/look for a suitable internal move	1	8	9
		Resume working for sender/at workplace as before but may leave there to change career in future	0	3	3
	No. of mentions*		1	11	12
	No. of respondents mentioning occupation in this area		1	11	12
	No. of mentions*		26	34	60
No. of respondents mentioning occupation in total		21	27	48	
No. of respondents who were unsure about occupation		4	0	4	
N		25	27	52	

\* Some students mentioned several occupations.

\*\* These students include ten students sponsored by their employers, and two students on scholarships.

is measured in intrinsic aspect such as personal development. (Yajima, 1986: 244)

My study and Yajima's findings both show that women do not necessarily have a strong interest in the future development of their studies or careers through study abroad.

As a whole, most students had occupational aspirations for the future, but some women were uncertain and needed more time for thought.

Some students, both women and men, named several occupations as those they were interested in following in the future. There were three types of students among them. The first were those to whom the specific workplace did not matter as long as one core aim was attained. They were concentrated in those who chose 'Lecturer/researcher at university' and 'Researcher at a think-tank/research institution. The second type were those who wanted two occupations at the same time, because one

was more interesting but financially unstable, and another occupation was necessary to make a living. For example, W10 showed an interest in being a freelance Japanese teacher and lecturer/researcher at university, and M51 hoped to be a writer as well as a lecturer/researcher at university. The third type were of those who were not sure which occupation they really wanted. W1, for example, wanted to be either a university lecturer or a primary school teacher. She was also interested in involving herself in developing educational material for teaching English.

Three students (two women and one man) worked on a full-time basis in the UK while they were taking postgraduate courses on a part-time basis - working for the Embassy of Japan, a subsidiary of a Japanese electrical goods manufacture as office workers, and for the BBC as an interpreter. However, all of them mentioned 'new' occupations they hoped to attain sometime after completing their courses. Through interviewing them, it became clear that they saw their current occupations as 'temporary', to earn a living in the UK and/or to gain experience. As was clear from the fact that they had already taken their jobs before they enrolled on their courses, they took these courses because they wanted to either change or advance their career by qualifying themselves. They also appeared to see the UK only as a temporary stay destination.

The table clearly shows that the area of Education/research was overwhelmingly the most popular among both women and men, and being a lecturer/researcher at university was particularly favoured: nine out of 20 women (45%) and 9 out of 16 men (56%) gave it as an occupational aspiration. Many of these students of both genders, were either PhD students or were hoping to go on to PhD courses after they completed their current courses. However, the reasons why they were interested in attaining such positions varied. The most common was, 'I want to do what I want', although only four (two women and two men) said this. M39, for example, stated:

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[M39, single, late 20s, MSc in Politics of the World Economy, full-time]

There were many possible reasons for their hopes to engage in particular occupations. However, it is important to note that many of them were probably aware that getting a commercial job would be extremely difficult as they had missed the chance immediately after they graduated from their universities, or after they had left their former job (see Section 2.3.1 for more discussion). Lecturing positions were amongst the few that they could hope to obtain. Moreover, lecturing appears to be attractive because of its high status. The desire to get a job that would make other people think that a student had not spent all her/his years in Britain for nothing seems to be strong.<sup>118</sup> Probably as a result of the combination of these negative and positive aspects, becoming a lecturer is a popular aspiration among many students, or one of the best of their limited choices.

Some selections of occupational intentions showed differences between women and men: for example, 'unsure about occupation', and 'Resume working for my sender at my workplace as before and apply for or look for a suitable internal move'. Four women were unsure as to what kind of occupation they wanted to have, but no men exhibited this lack of direction. For example, W4, who used to work for a law office in Tokyo and then as a secondary schoolteacher before coming to the UK, stated:

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[W4, single, early 30s, MA in TESOL, full-time]

She later added that she regretted not choosing a job that would enable her to be financially independent, and, therefore, was thinking about trying to be a medical doctor like her father and elder sister.

There were also cases like W4 and W25 who lost interest in the jobs, which they

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<sup>118</sup> See Imamura (1998) for the meaning of labour for people today. Imamura, a Japanese philosopher,

had originally planned to get while studying abroad. More women than men appeared to be wondering what they would like to do in the future during their courses.<sup>119</sup> Like W4, who referred to her desire to live with or near her parents, many women clung to the hope of working in Japan, and some wished to find a job near their parents' homes (see Section 6.6). In contrast, more single men than single women stated that they would not care whether they worked domestically or internationally, as long as they could get an interesting job. Typical examples of these men were two who hoped to be 'Civil servant at international organisation, for example, EU and UN' (see M46 on p. 217). As discussed in Section 2.3.3, it is a Japanese characteristic for people to live with their parents if they do not have to live apart from them, in contrast with Western people who tend to live apart from their parents if they do not have a particular reason to live with them. Further to this contention, my study implies that the desire to live with, or near parents, is stronger among women than men. Some women had so strong a desire to live with or near their parents that they appeared to be limiting their opportunities to get more interesting or more highly paid jobs.

Among the students on temporary leave from their current workplace, all 12 students on temporary leave from their workplace mentioned that they were planning to return to Japan. However, these students had different views about their work in the long term: one woman and eight men hoped to return to their workplace and apply or look for a suitable internal move. The numerical imbalance between women and men must be understood in the context of the imbalance of women and men respondents in this situation. Regarding the gendered imbalance as something which had 'naturally' happened, most of the students, women and men, on temporary leave were planning to return to their workplace: most of them appeared to regard the return as 'natural'. Possible reasons are that they were in secure positions with high salaries in Japan, especially in prestigious companies, and they therefore had no intention of leaving (Ogasawara, 1998: 53). In any case, the Japanese are those who change their occupations least among 11 nationalities (Soumucho Seishounen Taisaku Hombu, 1993: 36).<sup>120</sup> Their attitudes appear to explain why some of them saw their study abroad as

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states that today's work is strongly associated with the desire to be acknowledged.

<sup>119</sup> See W25 on p. 177 who wanted to go back to Japan and be a secondary schoolteacher again but lost interest in this while she was in the UK.

<sup>120</sup> The other countries are Germany, the Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Korea, France, Sweden, the UK, Brazil, and the US. See also Brinton (1993: 87).



only a break from their work. Moreover, some of them were under contract to work for employers for at least three to five years after they completed their courses, otherwise they would have to refund the cost of their study abroad. Strangely enough, their employers saw their employees' study abroad as an 'investment' in this context, although few were really keen to utilise what their employees learned abroad (see also W17 on p. 197).<sup>121</sup>

Secondly, the three men who evinced an interest in changing their career after working for their current employers for a while worked for different kinds of companies: a paper manufacture, a stock brokerage firm, and a bank. The first was already determined to run his father's business in the near future,<sup>122</sup> the second hoped to be self-employed, and the third wanted to be a stage actor. This man was married in his early 30s, with a wife and a small child, which might give impression that he was simply 'dreaming', in view of his position as breadwinner. However, it was his wife who most thought that he should try to be an actor. She was enthusiastic about this idea, firstly because both of them had wanted to be actors when they were younger, and secondly because she had had enough of his long working hours and seeing his tired face everyday.

## **8.2 Attitudes towards future careers: degrees of seriousness in pursuing a career**

It is not an easy task to ascertain each student's degree of seriousness or enthusiasm for getting a job, because it often happens that one who appears to be enthusiastic about this is actually equally (ore more) interested in other things: for example, in 'going out', 'hobbies', or 'continuing study'. In addition, being far away from home often makes students feel that they should not only study, but also enjoy other things, especially those they cannot do at home. There are also some PhD students who do something different from their studies, for example, going to a gym, joining an orchestra or learning ballet, in order to balance their studies and their private

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<sup>121</sup> It is said that employers' attitudes towards their employees' study abroad has been gradually changing, though.

<sup>122</sup> Some children, usually sons, work for other companies in the same field as their fathers' for several years before they succeed to their fathers' jobs. The working experience in other companies is considered

lives. There are also some students who become romantically involved with someone they meet in the UK. As a result, someone may appear to be enthusiastic about getting a job and can clearly explain their thoughts on the job they are seeking when asked, but never to start looking for one. This tendency is often seen among students who have sufficient money, for example, savings or financial support from a third party, often parents, and overwhelmingly among more women than men.<sup>123</sup> In relation to this point, my day-to-day observation indicates that students who say, 'I don't necessarily have to hurry to return to Japan' and diploma and MA students who defer the dates for the submission of their dissertation are often women. The main reasons why more women than men tend to lead lives of leisure is that women are less vocation-oriented than men,

**Table 8-2 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about the period following their course\***

Area	Women		Men		Total	
	No. of mentions	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents	No. of mentions	No. of respondents
(1) Marriage	15	11	10	9	25	20
(2) Parents	10	5	4	4	14	9
(3) Age	8	7	0	0	8	7
(4) Financial capacity	5	4	6	6	11	10
(5) Children	4	4	1	1	5	5
(6) Other considerations	1	1	2	1	3	2
Sub total	43	21	23	15	66	36
No considerations mentioned	-	4	-	12	-	16
N	-	25	-	27	-	52

\* Each area had several considerations.

\*\* Some respondents mentioned several considerations.

as useful for their future.

<sup>123</sup> A typical example is W5. See p. 223.

and more financially supported by their parents. As a result, they have less pressure to complete their studies in time.

I shall explore the factors which strongly affect how respondents feel about getting a job - marriage, parents, age, financial capacity, children, and others.

Of the 21 women and 15 men who mentioned thoughts on the post-course period, women made nearly twice as many mentions as did men. In particular, women made more mentions of most areas - i.e. marriage, parents, age, and children - than men. Financial capacity was the only area where the numbers were close. The gender difference could suggest that women were very concerned about traditionally feminine issues, while men were more concerned about money than about anything else.<sup>124</sup> It is especially worth noting that age appears to be a much more serious concern among women than men, because no men referred to the issue. Nevertheless, there were some students, especially men, who did not refer to any concerns in the future: most of them were married men sponsored by their employers, i.e. those who were in more secure positions than others. In the following section, I shall go on to examine all the six areas in more detail.

### **8.3 Considerations about marriage**

Japanese scholars have pointed out that many highly educated Japanese women desire to be 'housewives' (Aoki, 1990: 6; Yamada, 1999), which suggests that those women expect men to be breadwinners. In fact, only one woman, W25, mentioned her interest in being a housewife in this study. This could be an indication of the 'modernity' of the women students in it. On the other hand, there were many women who could not position themselves outside the traditional framework of marriage.

The following Table 8-3 shows that the mentions which demonstrate an interest in marriage, apart from 'Get a job first, marry second', were more likely to be made by women, especially single women. One possible reason for this is that the absolute number of single women was 22 in comparison with 16 single men: most of those who did not refer to marriage were indeed married. However, there was still a tendency for

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<sup>124</sup> Although the number of mentions related to marriage made by men is large, few single men were concerned about marriage. See Section 7.3.

more single women to refer to their interest in marriage than single men: 14 mentions by 22 women (64%) against three mentions by 16 men (19%). This tendency suggests that single women are the group who are most interested in the issue of marriage, as I argued in Chapter 6.

**Table 8-3 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about marriage related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondents mentioning each consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(1) Marriage	Want to depend on my (future) spouse financially	7	0	7
	Want to marry by/around 30	5	1	6
	Get a job first, marry second	2	8	10
	Strong academic career could be disadvantageous for arranged marriage	1	0	1
	Want my future spouse to be my business partner	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	15	10	25
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	11	9	20
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any considerations in this area</b>	14	18	32
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some respondents mentioned several considerations.

Seven women showed an interest in depending on their (future) spouses financially. Interestingly, some women intended to secure enough money to live comfortably through getting married, and to use marriage as a means to realise what they wanted to do. In other words, these women saw their husbands' work as a 'stepping stone' for their own fun, adventure and/or success. One of the examples is W25 who mentioned only her interest in being a housewife and nothing else as her future career.

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Women's aspirations to enjoy their hobbies while their (future) husbands are working have been named *Shin-shin seibetsu yakuwari bungyo ishiki* (new-new thoughts on role sharing by gender). This label for what is a common aspiration among today's young Japanese women means 'men at work and home, women at home and hobbies' (Ehara, 1999: 54).<sup>125</sup> W25 appears to be a typical example.

However, the extent to which they wanted to depend on their husbands financially as a housewife or wife differed from one woman to another. For example, W11, who worked full-time for a subsidiary of a Japanese electrical goods manufacturer in London and whose occupational interest for the future was to run her own business, appeared to be interested in entirely depending on her future husband financially.

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[W11, single, early 30s, MA in Applied Linguistics, part-time]

What is important here is that she is talking about her interest in taking a PhD course, running her own business, and getting married at the same time. Although what she

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<sup>125</sup> Ehara states that in Japan, the traditional attitude towards role sharing by gender was 'men at work, women at home', but there was a gradual shift towards a new attitude, 'men at work, women at home and work' which became apparent in the period between the late 80s and the early 90s. The latter attitude was supported by those who disagreed with the traditional role but could not think about equalisation of familial responsibility and housework between men and women.

really wanted to do appears extremely vague, she presented herself as serious about the prospect of managing all those things.

W22, who wanted to be a curator in the future, is also an interesting example of women expecting financial support from future husbands. She differs from the rest of the women in this group in that she was seeking financial independence at the same time. She was divorced, and I therefore asked whether she was interested in remarriage.

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[W22, single, late 30s, MA in Fine Art Administration & Curatorship, full-time]

Later in my interview with her, this woman went on to say that she ‘definitely’ wanted to be financially independent in her ‘later’ life.

The other four women’s interest in depending on their (future) husbands also varied. Three (two single and one married) mentioned that they were interested in working, but not to make a living, because they believed that it was their (future) husbands’ role to provide for the family (Ikei, 1991:167). The other woman showed a strong interest in working full-time for her livelihood, and sharing the housework with her future husband. She, however, added, ‘There is still a possibility that I may be a housewife in the future’.

For these women, marrying financially strong men means securing both financial and emotional comfort and providing them with safety nets. They can stop working if they want, and still live with little financial worries. Moreover, it is also clear that these women see themselves as 'second income earners', who work not to make a living but for self-fulfilment (Allen et al., 1990: 22). On the one hand, women are often calculating when they think about marriage, even though some of them are hardly aware of being so because they have no doubt about their beliefs that men should support their families. On the other hand, they underestimate the work required of a housewife in exchange for gaining financial security from men.

In contrast, there were no men who looked to their (future) wives for financial support, which suggests a clear division of women and men's roles.

Chapter 6 made clear that many women were worried about whether they could marry before it became too late, which would be at the age of about 30. This indicates a tendency among women, regardless of age, to consider 30 years of age as a cut-off point for getting married. Although the average age for women's first marriage was 26.6 in Japan in 1997 (see Section 2.3.2 for further discussion), the ideal age for marriage among the women in this study was clearly later. Five women in their 20s showed an interest in getting married at about the age of 30.<sup>126</sup> The following is an example: W13 who wanted to be a university lecturer.

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[W13, single, late 20s, MSc in Criminology, full-time]

As mentioned in Section 6.3, W13 constantly expressed her interest in getting married during the interview. Moreover, as her statement shows, not only she herself, but also her family members were desperate for her to marry 'in time'. The reason why her younger sister was urging her to marry seemed to be that she would feel guilty marrying before her older sister: younger brothers and sisters sometimes feel that they should delay their marriage to show their respect for their older siblings, although the

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<sup>126</sup> Some women, for example, W10, W15, and W14, who were referred to in Chapter 6, showed their frustration or guilt, but did not necessarily mention their interest in getting married in their 30s.

desired result does not always follow such a concern.

The other four women, including W23 (see p. 132), who were in their early middle 20s, implied that they would be in a hurry to get married when they reached 28 or 29.

In contrast, only one man referred to his interest in getting married by 30. M49 was unusual among single men in verbalising his interest in getting married. The possible reason was that he had a full-time steady job as a government official like M34 who also had a full-time job and also exhibited his worry about remaining single in his early 30s (see M34 on p. 132). M49 and M34 were both at the stage of being able to think about marriage because both of them had full-time jobs and had worked for a few years already.<sup>127</sup> This contrasts sharply with eight other men who said that they were not ready to think about marriage because they thought they should get jobs first, in accordance with social expectations of men.

Taking a close look at the men (50% of the total of 16 single men who were not engaged in full-time work at the time of this research), most referred to the pressure to be financially stable as an important consideration in being ready to think about marriage. For example, M41, who wanted to be a university lecturer, said:

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[M41, single, late 40s, PhD in English Language and Medieval Literature, full-time]

His statement shows how men tend to put their study first, job second, and marriage third in linear fashion (see also Section 6.3).

M46, who showed interest in being a lecturer or researcher, and M47, who was interested in working for an international organisation, also gave priority to finding jobs, and saw marriage as something that would follow. They even appeared to regard marriage as a constraint on looking for a job internationally, and, as a result, were not interested in getting married yet. M46, for example, said:

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<sup>127</sup> Both of them also described how long they had to work every day. They said it was not unusual that they stayed in their offices after midnight. M49 said that the ministry he worked for even had a big



[M46, single, late 20s, PhD in Industrial Relations and Personal Management, full-time]

M46's and M47's attitudes, of giving their priority to their jobs, suggest that they did so not only because they were concerned about their financial capacity to support their families. They also wanted to be free to take the job they wanted without being limited by familial responsibilities. Careers play an important role for some people, including many Japanese men, in forming their identity, and the attitudes of men towards career and marriage contrast sharply with those of women. While many men try to establish their career before they are 'interrupted' by marriage, women hope to take skilful advantage of marriage and their future husbands' income to establish their careers. Only two (9% of the total 22 single women who were not engaged in full-time work) presented their interest as getting a job first and marrying second.

#### **8.4 Considerations about parents**

The average age of the students in this study was 31.5 (women 32.0, and men 31.0). If we assume that their parents were aged 25 to 35 when they were born, the age of their parents was estimated between 57 and 67. This suggests that their parents would soon retire, or were already retired and living on a pension.<sup>128</sup> It is therefore natural that some students were trying to minimise the financial as well as emotional worry they brought to their parents during their study abroad and intended to be kind to their parents, especially when they returned to Japan.

It is often stated that no one appreciates what their parents have done for them until they live on their own. M48, an employee in a stock brokerage firm, seemed to speak for the students who had begun to really appreciate his parents once he had come to the UK:

Well, I want to be kind to my parents. I came to think so because I left them [to study

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bathroom and bedrooms for those who worked overnight.

here]... My living environment has changed completely and I have difficulty in speaking English. I cannot speak English as well as Japanese. I have few Japanese friends here. So I always live with my whole heart [in the UK]. My mother is now 50-something, but I sometimes wonder if she has lived as I do now. This makes me intend to be nice to her in the future.

[M48, married, late 20s, Diploma in Accounting and Finance, full-time]

**Table 8-4 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about parents related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondents mentioning each consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(2) Parents	Want to be with or near my parents	4	0	4
	Cannot help considering my family's happiness when I get married	2	0	2
	Want to be with or near my parents because my parents want this	1	1	2
	Want to work abroad, but worried about my parents	1	1	2
	Had better marry soon to relieve my parents	1	0	1
	Do not want to tell my mother that I end up getting marks of only 'C'	1	0	1
	Want to be kind to my parents	0	1	1
	Want to please my parents by getting a good job	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	10	4	14
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	5	4	9
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any considerations</b>	20	23	43
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* Some women respondents mentioned several considerations.

<sup>128</sup> The age of retirement is often 60 in Japan, in both public and private sectors.

However, for some women and men, the depth of their feeling towards their parents went even stronger than this kind of appreciation suggests.

Table 8-4 shows that only a few students across both genders referred to considerations about parents. Most of those who did so expressed a sense of guilt because of their parents' financial help. Students who did not mention parents were often those who owed little to their parents or who were prepared, or were prepared later, to return money they had borrowed from their parents.

Women made more mentions than men, but the small total number of respondents did not show a large difference: some women made more than one mention relating to parents, and these women tended to think of their parents more than any other students. It is also clear from the many considerations; not necessarily backed by a significant number of mentions, that the mentions concerning parents differed among the individuals irrespective of gender and background. The only consideration that indicated a possible gender difference was 'Want to be with or near my parents', while there were no considerations which presented commonality for women and men. Nevertheless, there was a tendency commonly seen among these individuals across both genders: many students who presented their concerns about their parents referred to the fact that their parents were getting old.

Four women expressed their interest in living with or near their parents: one woman was concerned about her parents' health, and the rest sought emotional security in living with or near their parents. For example, W10, who kept mentioning her concern about her parents during the interview, for example, said:

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[W10, single, late 20s, PhD in Japanese Linguistics, full-time]

This woman seemed to be willing to seek a job anywhere, even outside Japan, but at the same time, she was trying to be a dutiful daughter by being with her parents for a while. Yamada and his research team (Yamada, 1994: 21) found that the children of rich parents showed a stronger desire to take care of their parents in future than those of less rich parents; W10's father was a well-off editorial writer for one of the major Japanese newspapers, and her mother was a housewife. In the case of W10 and a small number of other women, the likelihood of them fully developing their career potential may be lessened by their concern for, and consideration of, their parents (see also Section 6.6).

W4, referred to earlier (see W4 on p. 208), mentioned that she was extremely depressed to know that a Japanese woman high-school teacher, who had got an MA degree in her course one year earlier than her, 'had to' be a high-school teacher again, not a university lecturer. W4 seemed to have realised that the MA degree she would obtain would not guarantee her 'upgrade' from high school teacher to university lecturer. This realisation after commencing her course might have led her to seek a sense of security in returning to living with her parents. Moreover, she had lived with them before she came to the UK, which may have strengthened her desire to go back to her parents' home. W15 said that she was not interested in marrying a British man, because she might then have to live far away from her parents.

It is clear that these women tended to see their lives in relation to the physical distance from their parents. Physical closeness was a very important consideration for these women because it also meant emotional closeness. Another woman stated that she wanted to live with her parents, if she could not marry in the future.

Yamada, a Japanese sociologist, uses the term *demodori-doukyo* (going back to their parents' home after living away) to describe a pattern of living led by Japanese undergraduate students who live by themselves at universities which are far from their parents' home, but return to their parents after their first and second years when they have to attend many classes (Yamada, 1999: 65). The lives that will be led by the women discussed in this section can be called *demodori-doukyo*, in that they intend to go back to their parents' homes, having already left once. It is, of course, possible to speculate that many more students in this study will go back to their parents' home once they have completed their courses. However, there is a difference between those women who showed an interest in living with or near their parents and those who did not: the former may make their parents' home the centre for their future activities for a

long time, while the latter are likely to leave their parents' homes, when they get jobs. The latter case therefore is more like a short moratorium before they take a step forward.

It is also important to note that the women in this study seldom showed their affection only to mothers, as is often claimed by scholars (Kimura and Baba, 1988; Madoka, 1988: 252-254, Ogura, 1994; Sechiyama, 1996: 203). There was generally affection for fathers as well (see also Section 6.6).

## **8.5 Considerations about age**

As we have seen, it is common for Japanese women students to hope to marry around the age of 30. In addition, although the average age of these women was only 32.0, many women of around 30, and some of the older women, were concerned about various aspects of their age. I shall now investigate considerations relating to age.

The following Table 8-5 shows that there were no mentions related to age made by men. As we have seen in Chapter 6, some men were ashamed of not working at their age, which suggests that these men were concerned about their age. Nevertheless, no men mentioned their age in relation to their future. The reason might be that they did not (have room to) see their ages as an obstacle to future action, as some women did.

Moreover, the different considerations which women mentioned suggest that they are conscious about their age in various ways, for example, in career development, giving birth, and being a woman in Japanese society.

Three women mentioned their age in relation to looking for a job. One was in her late 20s and the other two were both in their late 40s. All of them saw their age as a disadvantage when looking for a job. The following conversation was with a woman in her middle 40s who hoped to be a university lecturer:

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[W7, single, late 40s, PhD in African Literature, full-time]

**Table 8-5 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about their age related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondents mentioning each consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(3) Age	Worried about my age when I think about looking for a job	3	0	3
	Cannot help thinking about my age when I think about returning to Japanese society	2	0	2
	Worried about having children at an advanced age	2	0	2
	The older I get, the more difficult I can carry out what I want	1	0	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions*</b>	8	0	8
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	7	0	7
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any considerations in this area</b>	18	27	45
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

\* One woman respondent mentioned two considerations.

Her concern appears natural, when it is considered that many Japanese universities prefer to recruit people aged 35 or under as lecturers. Moreover, her parents - both retired - kept telling her, 'Come back to Japan as soon as possible and support us financially', thereby pressuring her to return to Japan as soon as possible.

W5 was also in her (late) 40s and concerned about her age:

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[W5, single, late 40s, PhD in Phonology (Language), full-time]

However, I had the impression that W5 was much more relaxed than W7, and enjoying her life in London. Firstly, despite her concern not to miss the chance of getting a job, this was her eighth year in the UK. Moreover, she was already in her late 30s when she made the decision to come to the UK, and she was one of the women who originally came to the UK primarily because they wanted to 'live abroad'. Secondly, she later said that 'she had not decided what she would do in the future'. She appeared to be

presenting a contradiction between her relaxed attitude and her concern about her age.

Concern about age *could* often be a consideration pushing students to get a job as soon as possible or before it was too late, but that did not necessarily mean that concern about age was the only pressing consideration. As with W5, whether students are in a hurry to return to Japan or to look for a job often seems to depend not only on their age, but also on other considerations, for example, their financial situation, interest in getting a job, and their own need or pressure from other people to get a job. Marital status and gender are also influential here, too. In W5's case, she did not seem to have to worry about money. Her parents were both supporting her financially - they had incomes from renting flats - and her mother kept telling her, 'The only thing I can do for you is to send money to you'.

In contrast with W7 and W5, who were both in their 40s, M41 was also in his (late) 40s. He was desperate to find a lectureship, in return for his parents' long-term financial support. He believed that they could 'save face' with their neighbours and relatives only if he became a lecturer. He, however, did not mention his concern about his age at all, nor did he seem to have allowed himself to wonder whether he could get such a position.

## 8.6 Considerations about financial independence

Section 6.2 examined students' issues related to the lack of financial capacity while they were studying abroad. In this chapter, I shall consider their considerations about financial capacity in the future.

No considerations indicated clear commonality to genders or difference between genders. Only two students, both women, voiced an interest in being financially independent from their (future) spouses, out of all the 52 students in this study. Women did not mention this probably because they had *little interest in* being so. In other words, they expect to depend financially on their (future) husbands, although to what degree would be a personal decision. In contrast, it is so *natural* for men that they are *financially independent* from their (future) wives, that they did not *bother* to mention it.

**Table 8-6 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about financial independence related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondents mentioning each consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(4) Financial Independence	Want to be financially independent from my (future) spouse	2	0	2
	Eager to earn money	1	3	4
	Want to be financially independent from my parents	1	2	3
	Do not care about being financially independent	1	0	1
	More interested in doing what I want than earning money	0	1	1
	Total no. of respondents*	5	6	11
	Total no. of mentions	4	6	10
	Total no. of respondents who did not mention any considerations in this area	21	21	42
	N	25	27	52

\* One woman respondent mentioned two considerations

## 8.7 Considerations about children

The belief that mothers should be with their small children is widely held among many Japanese people today, across both genders and of ages (Inoue, 1992: 88, 96; Ochiai, 1994: 173-174; Funabashi, 1995: 65; Takahashi and Kashiwagi, 1995: 21-23; Sechiyama, 1996: 183; Ehara, 1999: 22; Yuzuki, 1999: 309).<sup>129</sup> Sechiyama (1996:202) states that childrearing remains *ai no houshi* (a service of love) in today's Japan, although housework has started being recognised as work/labour.

Although many students mentioned marriage, only a few referred to children. A possible reason was that women who showed an interest in marriage might have been too concerned about whether or not they would marry to think further. Also, men could

<sup>129</sup> Koyama (1991) examines the historical transition in children rearing in Japan. She states that women were seen as stupid and mothers' love towards their children was therefore seen as harmful in the Edo period (1603-1868), but the bond between mothers and children has been gradually more emphasised, as time has passed.



**Table 8-7 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations about children related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondent mentioning each consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(5) Children	Not (particularly) interested in having children	2	0	2
	May leave/interested in leaving my job when having a baby	2	0	2
	Will prioritise my children's lives and education	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions</b>	4	1	5
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	4	1	5
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any considerations</b>	21	26	47
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

not think about marriage yet, because their minds were fully occupied by thoughts of their career, and children might therefore have been beyond their concern.

A few women stated little interest in having children because they thought that doing so would interrupt their career advancement: these include two of the few vocation-oriented women in this research. For example, a married PhD student in her middle 30s who wanted to be a university lecturer mentioned that she and her husband, who was also a PhD student and hoped to be a university lecturer, were considering adopting a child in order to avoid the interruption. In contrast, other women presented their priority for childcare, which implied the possibility of their being housewives at some points in their lives. Interestingly, one (W7) of the two who showed an interest in leaving work appeared to be occupationally successful: she was the only woman who was studying abroad with financial support from her employer in this study. She said that she deeply admired her women friends who had once been promising in study and careers, but who had sacrificed their abilities and had devoted themselves to childrearing as housewives.

Examining those women implies that many of them support to some extent the idea that a good mother takes care of her small children, being at home for 24 hours a day. Only a few women did not appear to support such a notion.

## 8.8 Other considerations

There were other comments that could not be categorised under any of the five areas dealt with so far. Although few in number, within a wider context of culture, they reflected interesting gender differences.

**Table 8-8 The frequency with which students mentioned considerations related to the post-course period**

Area	Consideration	No. of respondents mentioning consideration		Total
		Women	Men	
(6) Other considerations	Will work because I do not like doing nothing	1	0	1
	What I learn and do will strongly affect the rest of my career life	0	1	1
	I may have to sacrifice my family to establish my career	0	1	1
	<b>Total no. of mentions</b>	1	2	3
	<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	1	2	3
	<b>Total no. of respondents who did not mention any other considerations</b>	24	25	49
	<b>N</b>	25	27	52

These three considerations were all directly related to thoughts on careers, and imply different degrees of commitment. The woman who said she would work because she did not like doing nothing was one of the very few vocation-oriented women in this study, showing that many women who choose to work throughout their lives do so in order to enrich their lives, expecting their (future) husbands to be principal income earners. In relation to these women, Yamada (1999: 107) describes this phenomenon as the *Roudou no shumika* (making work a hobby), and says that the tendency is seen among Japanese young adults in general because many of them live with their caring parents who provide them with shelter and food, so that they do not have to work for their living. There is little difference between these young adults and Japanese women students who expect their (future) husbands to be principal income earners in Japan. Women who expect their (future) husbands to support them financially overwhelmingly appear to have this kind of attitude towards their career. Women's work and studying

abroad are therefore not always directly related to making a living (Mifune 1996, 149: 159).

In contrast, both considerations for men highlight how important their (future) career is for them.

## 8.9 Summary and discussion

Some of the findings obtained in this chapter overlap with those of previous chapters. However, the focus of investigation in this chapter has been 'thoughts on the future': the findings are therefore slightly different from those in previous chapters. I shall now summarise and analyse further the findings in this chapter.

Most students, especially most men, had clear ideas about what they wanted to do after they had completed their courses. The most popular job is that of a university lecturer, which is understandable when it is considered that these are postgraduate students, spending much money, time and energy to obtain an MA or PhD degree. However, in reality, the nearer the date of completion of their dissertations/theses, the more students realise how difficult it is to obtain a full-time or even a part-time position at a Japanese university, regardless of their level of study. There is, needless to say, little chance of a position at a foreign university. It is said that even people who get MA or PhD degrees at Japanese universities have difficulty in obtaining a position nowadays (Yamada, 1999: 48). In addition to the limited number of vacancies available, there is now a serious imbalance between the large number of universities and junior colleges, and the decreasing number of entrants due to the decrease in the birth-rate: Taki (2001) states that it will soon be a serious threat that some Japanese universities may go bankrupt.<sup>130</sup> As a result, already experienced lecturers are keen to move to more secure jobs, fearing that their workplaces (universities or junior colleges) might be closed down or have to merge (Ikei, 1991: 108).<sup>131</sup>

Students therefore need to be well prepared to be competitive with these experienced rivals. However, those who study or obtain degrees abroad are often disadvantaged against those from Japanese postgraduate schools. First, they are

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<sup>130</sup> See also The Asahi (7 March 2000) for the report on the hardship junior colleges have been facing.

<sup>131</sup> There are also women's universities which transfer to coeducational ones (Aoki, 1995: 13; Takahashi,

disadvantaged in establishing connections with people in Japanese universities and in professional societies in their fields. It is said that many Japanese universities continue to recruit new academic staff through 'informal' processes, i.e. *enko* or *kone* (both mean human relations), although some universities have started advertising externally for candidates for posts, placing public notices in universities or on website. Supervisors often recommend their students to universities that have vacancies by contacting alumni of the universities or acquaintances. There are also many professional societies that do not accept members, unless they are recommended by one or two people who are already members (see also footnote 156). This also means those who study abroad are disadvantaged in establishing a record of oral presentations and publications, because they are not qualified to contribute to those societies' journals or attend their conferences. Being abroad, makes it difficult to make the necessary contacts to begin to establish oneself in Japanese academic life.

There will be, of course, some people who patiently try to obtain a full-time position or a part-time position. In the latter case, they often have to work at more than one university, women and men have to grasp with both hands any opportunity to advance their situation and to make a living. However, some people may give up, because of the difficulty of obtaining any position. Faced with these odds, some women may be tempted to marry in order to seek financial and emotional security in marriage instead, especially as they get older. In contrast, some men may look for completely different jobs, but it is unlikely that they will look for financially strong women. Men know that they have to be finally independent, and that if they depend on women financially, others will look them down upon, referring to them as *himo* (pimps), an intolerable insult.

There were also some women who were not sure about what they wanted to do in the future. Are they perhaps wasting their time and money? They may, of course, expand their horizons through living in a foreign culture: however, they have invested too much just for that. The problem is similar to that of women who go to universities but willingly become housewives (Ikei, 1991: 24-28; Shinozuka, 1996: 123). Mifune (1996: 148) also states that 'although it can be recognised in developed countries that the more higher education women receive, the larger the number of women who are in

the labour market, the tendency is only recognised among the youth in Japan, but not among the middle aged and the elderly'. That is to say, many highly educated Japanese women remain housewives when they became middle-aged and, therefore, women's higher education has not been used in Japan as much as in other developed countries.

However, this lack of utilisation of investment in studying abroad does not only apply to these women but also to some of the students who were sponsored by their employers and on temporary leave from their workplaces. If they can make use of their knowledge in their work or on their own as, for example, doctors or pharmacists, they have few problems. However, some employees sent to the UK to study are later assigned to positions by their employers, regardless of what they have studied in the UK. This common occurrence in Japanese companies is disastrous. M43, sponsored by the bank he worked for, said:

QUOTATION REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

[M43, married with a child, early 30s, MBA, full-time]

Seeing these colleagues, what can he expect from his study abroad? It is not surprising that he regards his study abroad as just a 'break'. What they learn is wasted (see also W17 on p. 197).<sup>132</sup>

The high proportion of women who go on to higher education in Japan is not necessarily reflected in the proportion of those who get jobs, or in the length of their service (Sugita, 1996). The explanation can be sought in women's occupational categories. Most are in office work, which may be monotonous and repetitive, with little chance for promotion (see Section 2.3.1 for more discussion). However, since the desire to be housewives is still strong among highly educated women, it is inadequate to seek the reason why there are fewer highly educated married women in the labour

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<sup>132</sup> However, I later heard that M48, a student who was studying abroad with financial support from his company, a stock brokerage firm, was assigned to its London office. This suggests that he was at least given a chance to make use of his experience of studying abroad, and that his company regards his studying abroad as an investment for them.

market in Japan than other advanced countries only in the discriminatory labour market. According to Chikako Ogura, a Japanese feminist psychologist, today's Japanese women 'desire to be new housewives': wives who expect their future husbands to be the breadwinners and to help with housework, and want to devote themselves to enjoying their hobbies (Kouseisho, 1999 cited in Yamada 1999). They are prepared to do housework in exchange for obtaining what they want. However, how many of them know the meaning of being a housewife? It is argued that many women think of their own convenience too much to recognise the reality of the endless work (Madoka, 1988: 135).<sup>133</sup>

Only one woman in this study spoke directly of her interest in being a housewife and enjoying her hobby. However, other women described the advantages of getting married. They expected their (future) husbands to help them be financially independent, in order to do interesting but low paid jobs or while they fulfilled themselves in precarious professions. They knew that they could not easily realise their dreams by their own efforts financially, so this led them to shift their source of finance to their future husbands. These women have given up having economic or political power independent of men such as their fathers, and later their husbands and sons (Okely, 1987: 101). The tendency was clearly seen in W23 who depended on her parents' financial support during her study abroad, and who wanted to do translation work at home as 'a second income earner' in the future (Allen et al., 1990: 22).

If men seek financial support from their (future) wives as these women do from their (future) husbands, many disappointed women will probably criticise these men severely, as deplorable, shameful and hopeless. Such expectations are socially acceptable from women given the discriminatory nature of the labour market: women are still seen as being in a subordinate position to men.

Moreover, many women hoped to pursue studies, career, and marriage at the same time. In contrast, men tended to see these three as successive; they were aware of their financial responsibility for their (future) families as men and that they did not want their opportunities to get interesting jobs to be restricted by married life. Neither did they have a sense of their 'biological clock'. There is a conflict between men's awareness of their masculine responsibility and their desire to do what they want. Delaying marriage

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<sup>133</sup> It is also a reality that there is a cold view to see becoming a housewife as a 'downfall' to be a full-time house worker (Ueno, 1990: 196).

might therefore be the best or only way to reduce the conflict associated with their ambitions. In this respect, men appeared as very different from women, who willingly sacrifice for their marriage what they had gained through study and their career.

The number of respondents was never large, but it became clear that more women than men hoped to maintain a close relationship with their parental in various ways, especially living with or near them. The desire to return to the parents' home among women suggests that the relationships between daughters and their parents are close, but the maintenance of such relationships by living with or near them often meant limiting their career possibilities. Many jobs, for example, interpreter and Japanese teacher, which are only (or much more) available in big cities, for example, Tokyo or Osaka, are not easily obtainable in small towns. Moreover, when it is considered that some women tended to regard their parents' homes as a 'safety net' or 'shelter', there is doubt as to how and whether their experience of studying abroad would be made use of in the future. In addition, in the case of single women, it can be realistically anticipated that once they get married, they will regard their married lives as substitutes for their careers.

What is striking about the women's desire to live with or near their parents, because of the desire to maintain the close relationship with them, is that only women are socially allowed to express this desire. If a man desires the same thing and verbalises it, many women today will probably say that he is *kimochiwarui* (a weird man) or he must have a *mazakon* (mother fixation).<sup>134</sup> Ikei (1991), for example, in his book, *Joshigakusei Koukoku-ron* (An essay on the hope for women students to promote the nation) describes some highly educated women and men who successfully got married through a matrimonial agency which specialises in such people. One of the women reveals that when she received her current husband's CV and photographs, she thought that he would be suitable for her, but she was also worried that if his mother might suffer from the feeling that she was deprived of her son, and if the man might have had *mazakon*, simply because he was an only child (Ikei, 1991: 153). Japanese society is sometimes extremely unfair to men: women are extremely sensitive about the relationship between men and their mothers, whilst little attention is paid to the relationship between men and their fathers. It is often 'taboo' for men to show their

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<sup>134</sup> Mother fixation means the condition through which a son or daughter is controlled by his/her mother in his/her mind and he/she has little spontaneity (Katsura et al. 1981, 21). This parallels in some ways the English insult 'Mummy's boy'. See Kimura (1988: 79-80) which gives some examples of these men.

affection for their mothers in front of girlfriends and wives. The reason is that many women require men to be strong and independent and are reluctant to live with their (future) husbands' mothers, who usually live longer than fathers.

Even I, a woman, sometimes cannot help wondering why some women, including my friends, both single and married, are so sensitive and harsh about their boyfriends' and husbands' relationships with their mothers. One of the reasons seems to be that many of these women's mothers have had a hard time with their mothers-in-law, and these women have seen or heard about this. This is different from the case of my own mother, who lived with her mother and maintained a good relationship with her mother-in-law who lived far from us. Nevertheless, there are even women who happily describe themselves as having a *fazakon* (father complex) - I often hear Japanese women who I met in London use this word without shame - and few men blame women for maintaining close relationships with their mothers or fathers. Where married women live with their parents, as opposed to their parents-in-law, this can be regarded as signal of their empowerment.

What is clear from the gender difference is that Japanese men are sometimes unfairly treated by women, but remain silent. In one example, Ogasawara (1998) wonderfully describes the strategy which Japanese women office workers take in order to resist the men's superiority in their offices in *OL tachi no Resistance* (Resistance by women office workers).<sup>135</sup> Ogasawara describes how men workers can find themselves in an intolerable situation, being given the cold shoulder by these women, and how non-resistant men are. Moreover, according to a public-opinion poll on the family conducted by The Mainichi, the overall proportion of married children and their parents living together in 1990 had not changed very much since 1981. However, the proportion of married daughters living together with their parents nearly doubled, from 6.0% to 10.6%, while the proportion for married sons and their parents decreased from 34.8% to 28.2% (Ochiai 1994: 211). As I argued earlier, this is an indication of married women's empowerment.

Age cannot be judged as a concern peculiar to women, even though only women referred to it. It is likely that some men were also concerned about their age in relation to the future, especially regarding looking for a job. However, their career was their

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<sup>135</sup> She has also written a book on a similar topic: *Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.



primary, most pressing, and therefore most easily voiced concern. That is to say, women could afford to be sensitive to what other people thought about their activities, or to worry about whether they could get a job because of their age. They have more alternatives, including getting married and being housewives or continuing working when they get married or have children, or being single and continuing working, and it is much more acceptable for them to depend on their parents as well as on their (future) husbands.

In contrast, the strong societal expectation that men will earn their own living is internalised by men. Many men therefore see working as natural. However, it is true that women are put in a situation where they have to consider their age. More women than men are required to possess youth and beauty when they want to marry (see also Section 6.3), while more men than women are asked to have financial capacity, although this does not push them to marry as early as women.<sup>136</sup> Giving birth is also a risk for women if their pregnancy is late, which is a persistent worry for some women (Nishio, 1995). That is to say, age is often a crucial consideration for women in choosing their life courses.

Mifune (1996) reports that the more highly educated women are, the higher their parents' incomes are in Japan. This suggests the strong possibility that the mothers of highly educated women, like those in this study, are housewives, especially when it is considered that being a housewife became the fashion in Japan after the war (Ochiai, 1994: 17-19).<sup>137</sup> Similarly, it is said that many parents of students, both women and men, who go to the University of Tokyo, which is known as the best university in Japan, earn ¥10,000,000 (approx. £55,600: £1 = ¥180 as of April 2001) or more. In this respect, it seems to be true for men that the more highly educated they are, the higher their parents' incomes. Most students in this study had graduated from universities in Japan. They were therefore already highly educated in Japan and study abroad at postgraduate level was making them even more highly educated.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> For example, there is a well-known agency, Cupid Club, which specialises in setting marriage meetings for highly educated people in Tokyo. The qualifications which the agency requires men are different from women: men must be graduates from four-year universities or higher, be aged between 25 and 40, and engaged in secure occupations. In contrast, women must be graduates from two-year junior colleges or higher, and be aged between 20 and 35 (see Cupid Ltd.: <http://www.cupid.co.jp> for more information).

<sup>137</sup> In this study, the number of women students whose mothers were housewives was 16, while that of men was 18.

<sup>138</sup> Oropeza (1991: 281) states that international students 'often represent the "cream of the crop" of their

Most of them were therefore probably brought up in families that had few financial problems.<sup>139</sup> The effect of family environment - many were brought up in a family where the father was breadwinner and mother was a housewife - seems to be strong among women: many women students whose mothers were housewives may have thought that the lives their mother were leading was not so bad. Moreover, regarding the fact that only a few students stated an interest in being financially independent, different interpretations for each gender are required. Most of the women were not very concerned at being financially independent, while it was taken for granted by men to be so, which was why it was never mentioned. In relation to this point, Mifune (1996: 147) found that many highly educated married women were either working full-time or unemployed. Concerning Japanese women's thoughts on work, she states that extremely few women who graduated from universities hope to work part-time after their children had grow up, in comparison with those who graduated from lower secondary or upper secondary schools. In other words, highly educated women are not interested in working unless they have to be financially independent or able to work in jobs that enable them to make use of their abilities (Mifune, 1996: 149). The higher education, which they received, can be considered as 'conspicuous consumption' to attract highly educated and promising men, as well as for more instrumental use. Mifune's view appears to be applicable to some women in this study. Some women inferred that if they could not find a challenging job, they might find their interests at home or in their hobbies, including volunteer work; such women desire *Shin-shin seibetsu yakuwari bungyo ishiki*, as described earlier (see p.215 for explanation of this term).<sup>140</sup>

Concerning women's attitudes towards careers and family life, Inoue and Ehara (1999: 142) reports that whereas 38.3% of highly educated women desire to marry and to work after having children, which is the ideal life course for these women, only 23.4% of them actually pursue such a life course.<sup>141</sup> She seeks the reasons in the labour market, which compels women to leave work when they get married and/or have babies (see also Ikei, 1991: 152, 198; Brinton, 1993: 89; Ogasawara, 1998). On the other hand,

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country's educated population'.

<sup>139</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean that all of the students in this study were rich, as discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>140</sup> See p. 214 for explanation of this term.

<sup>141</sup> See also Sugiyama (1996) for further discussion.

Yamada (1994: 211) states that 'only upper class women can choose whether they will put their priorities in careers or in the home'. As has been pointed out in much of the literature (Mifune, 1996: 147; Yuzawa, 1996: 97), the more highly educated women are, the higher the possibility that they will marry men with high incomes. Highly educated women therefore may have more freedom to choose whether they will continue working or devote themselves to looking after their homes after getting married, than those who graduated from lower secondary or upper secondary schools. The findings of this study - that some women hoped to establish their careers rather than have children, while others implied the possibility of withdrawing from work - confirms Inoue and Ehara's and Yamada's argument. Many highly educated women encounter occasions to decide whether they will continue working when they marry or have children.

Moreover, it is often the case that women who want to be university lecturers complete their degree courses and start looking for positions when they also need to consider having children because of the risk of approaching an age when giving birth carries greater risks (see also Section 6.3). However, at the same time, it must be noted that women do not always leave their work only because of pressure from the labour market. Some women leave due to pressure from husbands, relatives, and neighbours. Also some women, often highly educated, withdraw from work because they do not have to think about earning money, thanks to their financially strong husbands. Some of my friends decide to give up work, even though they had earlier taken maternity leave, because 'My child is so cute that I wanted to be with her/him'.

According to a survey by Soumucho in 1997,<sup>142</sup> Japanese young people thought less about working for their living than young people in any other developed countries (Soumucho, 1997 cited in Yamada, 1999: 126). Yamada seeks the reason in the preference among many young Japanese people for being 'parasites' in their parents' homes, which give them financial and emotional leeway. A similar tendency is found among highly educated single women: many of them are eager to find men whom they can 'live off', even though academics have already pointed out, due to changing social conditions, it will be unrealistic for today's single women to expect the same quality of life as their mothers (Ochiai, 1994: 20; Yamada, 1999: 85). It is again clear that women

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<sup>142</sup> Due to the governmental restructuring in January 2001, the Public Management Agency no longer exists. It became the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, merging with the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.

take advantage of being women: they make use of their subordinate positions to men. However, at the same time, this means that these women prevent other women who have to make their own livings from doing so, and this helps to maintain the traditional gender relationship (Ogasawara, 1998: 139-140, 174).

A typical example is a friend of mine whose husband works for one of the major insurance companies in Tokyo: the couple are therefore financially comfortable. She works on a part-time basis as a temporary member of the bank she used to work before she got married. For both of them, there are many possible reasons why she works part-time. In order to save face, her husband may not want his colleagues to know that his wife works, especially when many of their wives are housewives. He may want to maintain his authority over his wife by keeping her dependent on him.<sup>143</sup> He may also want to be welcomed by his wife whenever he gets home. As for the wife, she wants to obtain pocket money, using her experience and/or ability. The working-time is flexible, and it is easy for her to leave or have a day off from her workplaces. She has to accompany her husband when he is transferred to another office. She does not need to work on a full-time basis. Finally, it is not financially advantageous for her to work on a full-time basis because of a tax system called *1,030,000 yen no Kabe* (The wall of approx. £5,700: £1 = ¥180 as of April 2001). As long as a wife's annual income is ¥1,030,000 or less, a husband can get an allowance for his spouse. This means that the husbands lose the allowance if their wives income is above ¥1,030,000. The total income of husbands and wives is then lower, unless the wives earn more than around ¥3,000,000. In addition, *if* the husband works for a big company, his employers will give him an additional pay for his spouse (Hattori, 1999: 94; Komatsu, 1993: 165). The couple can also live in a house let to them by his employer at an extremely reasonable rent. However, if her income exceeds a certain amount, they would have to rent their own house or flat which would cost a lot of money. As a result, such wives intentionally limit their annual income in order not to suffer any financial loss. That is to say, they are under the control of the husbands' employers.

One day, my friend told me that one of her colleagues, who also worked part-time and on a contract base, was desperate to work full-time within her company. She was divorced and had to make her living, yet she was afraid that her contract would be

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<sup>143</sup>Komatsu (1993: 195) further discusses the discomfort husbands may feel when their wives work.

terminated by her employer unilaterally, after working for many years.<sup>144</sup> My friend appeared to sympathise strongly with the woman, but without being aware that, through her preference for temporary work, she was contributing to the continuation of the system that placed her colleague in that situation. My friend fully enjoys her life as the wife of a man with high income and with the pocket money, which she obtains from her work. However, in reality, she may also face divorce, the redundancy or the death of her husband, like her colleague. At the moment, she works four days a week, attends an English conversation course in central Tokyo once every week as a hobby, and comes to the UK nearly every year to brush up her English, usually by herself.<sup>145</sup> She attended a language course in York for three weeks last summer, while her husband works six days a week from early morning to late at night in Tokyo.<sup>146</sup> As we can see from this example, women's life styles are often determined by whether or not they are married and how high the income of their husbands is. This example also shows what the consequences can be for women, who, for whatever reason, lose their husbands.

## 8.10 Conclusion

This chapter has examined what kinds of occupation Japanese postgraduate students hoped to attain after completing their courses, and tried to see how serious their aspirations were by looking into some considerations that could be thought of as a measure of their seriousness. By doing this, I tried to understand the gender difference in issues facing Japanese postgraduate students while they were studying abroad.

My resulting analysis showed that women's thoughts on getting a job were so complicated that it was impossible to say that one was serious and another was not, while men's thoughts were apparently less complex. The life course which women anticipated was clearly different from that of men. In this conclusion, I shall review men's life course, which is more linear, first, and then the more complicated one of the women.

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<sup>144</sup> See Nakano (1993) for the further discussion on the working conditions of working on a contract base.

<sup>145</sup> Lock (1996) also examines the luxurious life of Japanese mothers and wives who have successfully reached post-childrearing years.

<sup>146</sup> According to my friend, her husband does not officially have to work six days a week, but he has to go to his company either Saturday or Sunday to do work that he could not finish during the weekdays.

As has been mentioned, young Japanese people are less interested in working for making a living than those in other countries (see Section 2.3.1). So, why are there many cases of *karoushi* (death from overwork) in Japan,<sup>147</sup> and why do even young workers lose their lives through working overtime? Is the reason only that they are under pressure from their employers or seniors?

Yamada (1999) does not differentiate by gender 'and' mode of working - i.e. full-time or part-time - in his study of single people who are 'parasites' in their parents' home and enjoy using their salaries for whatever they want. However, the crucial difference between women and men is that overwhelmingly men work full-time, regardless whether or not they occupy 'parasitic' roles, while there are more varieties in women's mode of working, for example, full-time, part-time, or unemployed. It is less socially acceptable for men to work part-time or be unemployed, even if their parents have enough money to support them. Moreover, in general, men cannot depend financially on their (future) spouses, while women can. Men have to work hard on a full-time basis throughout their lives, i.e. both before and after marriage. The only advantages men have over women is, needless to say, that they have much more chance of promotion, i.e. getting high salaries, and more interesting jobs, and that they can delay the timing of marriage much longer. Men can take their time, and their looks countless: a dual sexual standard exists. As far as this study is concerned, men delay their marriage because they are aware that their freedom to be mobile in respect of career choice and space will be limited through marriage, rather than because they know that they can marry as long as they have economic power (see Section 6.3). Some men in this study, aged about 30 and without jobs even stated that if they did not have a chance to marry, they would accept this and remain single. The unemployed seldom showed a great desire to get married, and by delaying their marriage, hoped to obtain the jobs they liked most. Moreover, when they get married, the pressure to be a breadwinner or principal income earner becomes strong.

In a way, a man's life course is extremely simple: he works hard because he cannot depend financially on anyone, regardless of whether he is single or married.

In contrast to men, women's life course is much more complex, because she has

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<sup>147</sup> According to Reuters Health (1999), 'in a study of 196,775 middle-aged employees working in Central Japan, the rate for the incidence of sudden death was 21.9 per 100,000 male employees and 5.7 per 100,000 female employees between 1989 to 1995'.

many more alternatives, especially when she is single; she can rely financially on her parents, (future) husband, or both, if they wishes.

Surprisingly, in this study, women who claimed their interest in being financially independent from their (future) husbands were as few as those who mentioned their interest in being housewives in the future. Even women who appeared to be vocationally minded tended to regard themselves as 'second income earners' when they got married, and they expected to be so dependent on their (future) husbands financially that they implied the possibility of leaving their jobs without much hesitation.

Discrimination against women in the labour market obviously exists, and leads them to seek security in marriage (see Section 2.3.2 for further discussion). However, this does not necessarily mean that such discrimination is the sole reason for a woman's lower rate of entry into, and early departure from the labour market. As stated earlier, highly educated women (and probably highly educated men, too) tend to be interested in getting jobs that are full-time, worth doing, and match their knowledge and experience. Their pride in obtaining MAs or PhDs may make it more difficult for them to settle down in jobs that do not fulfil their expectations. The facts that they have obtained these degrees and are no longer as young as new graduates may also have negative effects on securing jobs, even if they become interested in those which do not require postgraduate-level knowledge. The reason is that some employers are reluctant to hire people with postgraduate degrees, because they have to pay them higher salaries than new graduates, and it is difficult to manage these 'big headed' people (Ushiogi, 1993, 310; Yamamoto, 1995: 129). Indeed, many women in this study hoped to be university lecturers, just like the men. However, as stated earlier, in reality, the job market has been extremely competitive, especially recently. In this context, fewer women may have the tenacity to look for a (full-time) position than men, because they can escape to protection offered by their parents or husbands, or to marriage, unlike men, for whom making a living is unavoidably tied in with making their own life.<sup>148</sup>

The culture and social conditions are such that women cannot live comfortably unless they are married at a certain age; otherwise they are seen as 'improper'. Therefore, marriage seems to be the destiny, which they have to follow. Many of the

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See <http://www.heartinfo.com/reutersnews/t040813f.htm>.

<sup>148</sup> There are cases of single working people, both women and men who are 'parasites' on their parents to reduce their living costs and housework, as Yamada (1999) reports. However, men are destined to earn

women in this study were already at the age to be thinking about marriage, at about the age of 30 or over, and the pressure from others to marry was also strong. Anxiety about getting old also worked as if it were a time bomb, because they have to think about 'selling themselves in the better conditions' and the risk of giving birth at an advanced age. Ikei (1991: 143) mentioned above, states that today's highly educated women do not hasten to marry in comparison with women in old days, and his opinion appears to be justifiable. However, this does not mean that those who appear to be enjoying study or work are free from feelings of pressure. Many of them are, indeed, desperate to marry before it is too late. Moreover, when the hardship women encounter in the difficult circumstances of looking for a job, when they are no longer young and 'attractive', is taken into account, marriage plays a role as the saviour for these women.

There were, however, some women who were more calculating than those who seek only happiness and a sense of security in marriage. These women were interested in getting married and using their future husbands' money as 'stepping-stones' to empower them occupationally. This strategy for getting a job is socially sanctioned for women. Such a strategy does not sound appealing, but society can never criticise these women, because society 'by not giving the same status to women as men' is the main cause for making the strategy possible and desirable.<sup>149</sup> If women were treated equally to men and had the same social and occupational status as men, they would not even think of depending financially on men in the first place, or, at least, the degree of dependence among women and men would not be unilateral, but more mutual.

However, we must note that these 'calculating' women after all act in the existing and traditional framework of gender division, and help to hold the framework in place by making use of it. Delphy and Leonard (1992: 18) state that '[w]ithin the family in our society, women are dominated in order that their work may be exploited and because their work is exploited'. We must also remember that some women look for financially strong men in order to marry to them and exploit their financial power, and thus fall into the situation of being exploited by men. Besides, these women hinder other women who really try to be independent on their own without the financial support of men, i.e. independent outside the existing framework.

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their livings sooner or later, unlike women who are not necessarily so.

<sup>149</sup> Also see Ehara (1999: 59). Ehara also makes similar comments on women who hope to be housewives and enjoy hobbies, while they expect their husbands to support their families and share



As a result, the situation in which women's life course is determined by whether or not they are married, and whether or not their husbands earn a high income, has endured over time. Moreover, ultimately, women's life course is determined by how wealthy their parents are, for if their parents are wealthy, they have more chance of receiving a higher education than those whose parents are not, and because highly educated women tend to marry highly educated men (Ueno, 1990: 168). Unless more women challenge the existing circumstances without depending on their (future) husbands' money, the inferior position of women will continue.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusion**

The following four research questions were located in this study, as shown in 4.1:  
(1) What kinds of issues do postgraduates from a specific high-income country face while studying abroad? (2) Do these issues differ between women and men? If so, in what ways? (3) Why do these differences occur? (4) Why do these differences continue? Before offering a summary of the findings in relation to these questions, I shall first look at what study abroad means for Japanese postgraduate students. At the end I shall draw some conclusions and evaluate the contribution of this study to research on the international students, and indicate the implications that emerge for both Japan and the UK.

#### **9.1 The meaning and role of study abroad for Japanese postgraduate students**

Some interesting characteristics of Japanese postgraduate students' study abroad have been noted in this study.

Firstly, studying abroad at postgraduate level was an object of adventure or exploration, and an experience of intellectual tourism for some students, especially for women. Their goal was to study abroad and to complete their course for its own sake. Study abroad here was more an object of consumption than investment. Such students tended to choose humanities and social sciences, which were not as advantageous as other courses in the search for work. For others, and especially for men, it was part of a process of career advancement for others, especially for men, and it was therefore more an object of investment. These students tended to take courses related to their previous or current occupations and business, which might be expected to benefit them when they returned to work or when they looked for new jobs.

The gender differences found in this study suggest that the meanings of study abroad are too diverse to categorise Japanese students as a single group. It is therefore

not appropriate to state, as Ishizuki does (Ishizuki, 1990: 7), that Japanese study abroad has been of the 'investment-type' - with no qualification by gender. Furthermore, a careful analysis is required when interpreting the increase in numbers of students sent by their employers, since some students in this study complained that their employers did not really value what they were doing as an investment. This shows that being sent by one's employers does not necessarily infer 'investment-type' study.

Secondly, Japan depends heavily on foreign higher education, both in terms of skills and knowledge and in training people who are not on the 'highway to success'. There are some students who are not successful in joining, or staying on, the established route to success in Japanese society, but they hope to step forward to join or, rejoin, the highway at a later date. It is almost impossible for Japanese people to enter a big company without having studied at a prestigious university. It is also difficult for those who have once left the big companies to re-enter the same sort of company again because most only hire new graduates, although the situation is gradually changing. There are also other students who have left the highway to success because they reject its rigid aspects - for instance, the seniority employment system in which individuals are assessed less by their abilities than by their age. These students hope to make their own way outside the framework. Regardless of whether they are in the former or the latter groups, such students study abroad to establish or re-establish themselves, as a consequence of the lack of alternatives for doing so in Japan.<sup>150</sup> They take the 'alternative routes' provided by UK higher education. For those students not successful in joining, or staying on the established route, study abroad becomes 'a consolation prize'; for those who have left the 'highway' studying abroad has the role of 'personal escalator'; for Japanese higher education, foreign higher education plays 'a complementary role'.

Thirdly, for some people, study abroad is an 'oasis' to refresh themselves after a number of years working hard, or to overcome bitter experiences, for example, relationship problems or divorce, in their home country. Such study may also be 'a shelter' against other kinds of bitter experiences, for example, pressure to marry from, or discord with, parents.

Whatever the reasons, study abroad is attractive because it brings individuals the

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<sup>150</sup> As discussed in Sections 2.4 and 9.5, it is difficult to go on to postgraduate education because of the lack of routes when people want to learn subjects different from those which they studied at first degree.

opportunity to lead different lives, both in their overseas destinations and in their home countries upon their return. Ironically, however, the higher an individual's expectation of studying abroad, the more risky it can appear. In Japan, if people who study abroad are new graduates, it often means they miss the best time to look for jobs. If they have work experience, they are still not certain to advance their career through studying abroad. By contrast, study abroad appears to be much easier and less disappointing for those, often women, who seek temporary enjoyment or an escape from Japan. Study abroad therefore has two dimensions: attractions and risks. Whether or not people who are interested in studying abroad really do so depends on which aspect carries more weight. Considering other factors, for example, the cost of study abroad and pressures from other people, study abroad can never be an easy choice. However, students, who overcome their fear of the risks and these other factors and finally decide to study abroad, are generally more focused on, and serious about, their studies than students who decide to do so without much thought. The former group, those students who overcame the fear and other factors, are more sensitive to the psychological and financial costs they pay.

## **9.2 The links between issues while studying abroad, reasons for the decisions to study abroad, and thoughts on the post-study period**

There were a variety of issues facing Japanese postgraduate students while studying abroad, and not only in their educational lives but also in their personal lives. Many issues also demonstrated differences by gender. In educational life, the issues were: lack of language proficiency, lack of confidence about academic efficiency, lonely work, and problems in associating with the Japanese community. In personal life, the issues were: a sense of guilt towards parents or spouses providing financial support, the sense of inferiority towards friends of the same generation who earn money, the sense of being disconnected through not working, not yet being married, interference from relatives, siblings or others, dilemmas between wanting to study more and responsibility for accompanying family members, objections against studying abroad from parents, friends or acquaintances, high expectations from parents, teachers or friends and the pressure to meet these expectations, continuous worries about parents, and various other problems which they could do little about.

Among these issues, the only one that was clearly common to both women and men was concern for language proficiency. Other issues were either more likely for women or for men, and there were also differences within each gender in relation to level of study, marital status, and occupational position (employed or unemployed). On the whole, women tended to suffer from more issues and in more complicated ways than men.

In particular, issues to do with marriage and parents appeared to be the two most intensely worrying issues for women, although they were limited to single women and mainly to those who had financial support from their parents. The common solution these women chose to free themselves from their guilt was to plan to return to their parents and live happily with them. That is to say, they hoped to repay their parents' kindness through offering 'emotional work'. This seems the perfect solution since they could be freed from the sense of guilt towards their parents, stop worrying about them, enjoy the sense of relief by telling themselves that they have somewhere to return to after completing their courses, and make their parents happy by returning to their parents all at the same time.

There were indeed numerically more women and men who referred to lack of language proficiency than who mentioned marriage or parents.<sup>151</sup> However, when women referred to marriage or parents, they appeared to be much more depressed than when they mentioned anything else. As a whole, there was a tendency for women, usually those who had drifted into being postgraduate students, to be relatively traditional and little different from 'ordinary' Japanese women. This indicates that women who study abroad at postgraduate level are not particularly modern, and their level of study also does not affect their views on life dramatically.

By contrast, men's issues were often related to the fact that they were not yet earning money or not earning at present. The issues included the sense of inferiority to friends of the same generation who earners, and of being disconnected through not working.

As for those men who had not yet been employed, some were studying abroad with financial support from their parents, and their solution to reducing the sense of guilt towards their parents was to intend to complete their course and get a job as soon as

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<sup>151</sup> There was an overlap of women in these three areas.

possible. The group of men who had left their work to study abroad was also keen to start working again. Regardless of the differences between these groups, they both clearly demonstrated the discomfort they felt through not earning. However, the issues that caused discomfort worked as powerful motivations for them to make rapid progress on their courses as well as in their careers at the same time, which is in sharp contrast to the case of women. Women's issues - i.e. marriage and parents - appeared to be hindering them from looking for jobs or from working full-time in the future, since these issues allowed them to expect to depend financially on other people, primarily parents and future husbands.

After examining the issues facing Japanese postgraduate students while studying abroad, I investigated the reasons why they made the decisions to study abroad beforehand and their thoughts on the post-course period. This involved finding clues about why individuals experienced different issues *while* studying abroad, with particular reference to gender.

In examining the reasons for their decisions to study abroad, it became clear that more women than men moved on, or drifted into, postgraduate studies from other forms of education, such as language courses and exchange programmes. There were also some wives and a daughter enjoying 'me-too' studying abroad after having come to the UK initially to accompany their husbands or father. In contrast, most men had, from the beginning, come to the UK to undertake postgraduate studies. Moreover, in the case of men who had not had jobs, they were more determined than women to make use of their experiences of studying abroad to support them in their search for jobs. The only exception among the men were some of those who were sponsored by their employers: they had secure jobs and tended to see study abroad as 'a break'.

Given the gender differences summarised here, it is clear that studying abroad is a much more casual and accessible activity for women than men. Women seem to be able to study abroad with fewer formal reasons than men. They showed this by raising their interests in living abroad, as well as in study and career advancement, when explaining their decision to study abroad in the UK. Men mentioned only the latter two. In addition, the statistically larger number of Japanese women than men who study abroad also supports the view that study abroad is more accessible for women (see Table 2-2).

A similar gender difference was also seen in relation to students' future intentions. The number of women who hoped to be financially independent was as small as the

number wanting to be housewives. By contrast, men who had not worked before were more determined to look for jobs and clearer about what kind of occupations they wanted to get in the future than the women. Most of the men who were on temporary leave from their work were willing to return to their workplaces, while a few were considering changing their workplaces or occupations.

The reason why many women tended to face more issues than men while studying abroad seemed to be strongly related to the lack of clarity of their reasons for studying abroad and their lack of plans once they had completed their courses. Many women were not as focused on study as men, and were thinking of other things at the same time. Men appeared to be focused on study and to see studying abroad as a means to advance their careers and so tended to take an 'indifferent' attitude and let personal matters take their course.

### **9.3 Japanese study abroad and Japanese society**

Women were apt to think about study, careers, and marriage all at the same time, and were often confused and upset.<sup>152</sup> By contrast, men tended to consider these concerns in sequence. It was impressive that some men saw marriage as possibly preventing them from looking for jobs freely, and were sure that they would not marry until they were settled in their careers. Behind this gender difference was a major premise, which the women were aware of: provided they can find a husband, women have more life choices through marriage than men, i.e. women are socially allowed to be housewives or second income-earners, while men are expected to be breadwinners or principal income-earners. Moreover, women are socially more allowed to continue to depend on their parents than men. In this respect women appear freer from financial responsibility and less impelled to think about careers than men, and the freedom they are enjoying can lead us to imagine that they are more leisurely and cheerful than men while studying abroad. The reality is, however, the opposite: their 'freedom' prevented women from focusing on one thing at a time and led them to face many issues simultaneously.

It became clear that two influential factors discouraged women from making use of

their experience of study abroad in future careers. These also answer the third and fourth research questions.

The first was the lack of social expectation that women would commit themselves to life-long work. It is assumed that most women will marry, and leave their jobs when they get married or give birth, while men will work until retiring age. Many occupational categories, promotion systems and salary scales are based on these premises, and women are pushed aside from life-long employment and encouraged to find happiness in marriage. Therefore, many women of marriageable age, including many of those in this study, cannot picture themselves unmarried and/or actively working in ten or even five years' time. They are resigned to a short future career. Even women who were keen to get jobs thus could not easily link their experience of study abroad with a career. For some women, it is fortunate to be free of the desperate search for a job after they complete their course, but for others, it is unfortunate to encounter low or even absent expectations of them in the labour market. Men have much more opportunity to be challenged to achieve their full potential than women.

The second factor was the effect of the close relationship between parents and daughters. The gender difference suggests that while men believed that they should earn their own living as soon as possible and were expected to do so by their parents, women knew that their parents were happy to be with them, and would allow them to use their houses as 'shelters' until they were settled in marriage or a career. Women were not as desperate as men to find jobs that would enable them to be financially independent, nor were they as ready to try to find jobs as men since they knew the limited opportunities that existed for women. Moreover, as was clear from the fact that the contact time women had with their parents while studying abroad was twice as long as that of men (see Section 6.6), more women than men maintained close relationship with their parents. This continuing closeness discouraged these women from leaving their home, i.e. being independent women, and making use of the education they had received abroad in their careers.

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<sup>152</sup> As indicated earlier (footnote 77 on p. 127), I did not ask their sexuality.



## **9.4 The contribution of this study to research on international students**

There were various differences between this study and the previous studies in the approach to examining international students' lives.

Firstly, the latter have tended to rely on a quantitative approach that requires researchers to define in advance questions 'based on the knowledge and assumptions which the researchers already had'. As a result, they have hardly explored other possibilities. For example, it has been believed that issues to do with finance are limited to whether or not students have enough money to proceed with their study abroad (see Section 6.2). Or that for international students the major purpose was improving their career opportunities. Moreover, the complexity of this concern has not been examined deeply enough. These limitations are strongly related to the fact that previous studies relied on a quantitative approach: they have not utilised qualitative methods, which are useful in exploring an area that has not yet been well studied.

Secondly, previous studies have tended to treat international students as a homogeneous group, with little segmentation by, for example, ethnicity, gender or subject and level of study.

Thirdly, previous studies have also tended to examine issues in educational lives only, as if issues facing international students were limited to these. They have also tended to seek interrelationship within this limited set of issues - for instance, between lack of language proficiency and homesickness.

Fourthly, previous studies have treated reasons why international students decided to study abroad, the issues which they encounter while studying abroad, and their thoughts on the post-course period, separately. The links between them have been ignored. This is evident in the fact that previous studies, based on a quantitative approach, usually asked respondents only to choose from previously provided reasons or to rank them in importance by the use of numbers (see, for example, Uyeki, 1993: 4). That is to say, these chosen reasons were treated as separate, with little close investigation of interaction among them. Such an approach has not made it possible to grasp the complicated links between study-related and non-study-related reasons.

This study has taken a different approach. Firstly, it has made full use of a qualitative approach. As a result, some new findings have emerged. Women mentioned more issues than men, and students experienced issues in their personal as

well as educational lives. Also, issues to do with finance were not always related to financial difficulties but 'psychological'. Some of these psychological issues worked in a positive way among men, motivating them to complete their studies as soon as possible.

It also became clear that most students had more than one issue to think about, and that there were differences in the degrees of concern about these issues. As far as mentions on careers were concerned, many students, both women and men, stated that they had decided to study abroad for career advancement. However, how seriously individual students were actually concerned about career advancement varied, and some of them, often women, appeared to be paying lip service when they voiced their concerns. In fact, there were not many women whose major concerns while studying abroad were their future careers. That is to say, the range and depth of concerns while studying abroad were often related to the reasons why students had decided to take postgraduate courses abroad, and how important those reasons were. There was indeed a different weight for each reason for each student. At the same time, these issues were also related to thoughts on the future. These complexities show the necessity of being careful not to be deceived by the number of responses, but to analyse their content deeply, and to pay attention to gender differences.

Secondly, while this study has tried to examine the variations in issues facing Japanese postgraduate students at the University of London with special reference to gender, other differences, for example, level of study, field of study, age, and marital status, have also been highlighted.<sup>153</sup>

Thirdly, this study has examined not only issues in educational lives but also those in 'personal lives', and sought interrelationships within each of these two areas as well as between them. Consequently, it has become clear that some students experienced worries in their personal lives (for example, aging parents at home, whether they could marry, or whether their families whom they brought with them to the UK were enjoying their stay) as much as issues in their educational lives. Unlike the findings of previous research, this study found little relationship between lack of language proficiency and homesickness, although there were indeed some students who did experience lack of language proficiency and homesickness. The reason seemed to be that students were

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<sup>153</sup> Class and locality were also occasionally discussed, but not as deeply as the other factors mentioned here, because they appeared to be less relevant.

concerned about their lack of language proficiency not because of their poor English but because they hoped to work on improving their English and the desire was infinite: their English level was not so poor as to isolate them from other students. Moreover, they spent a lot of time with other Japanese students, and therefore did not have to suffer from homesickness because of the isolation caused by poor English. The main cause of homesickness was rather their close relationship with their parents, which was recognised only among women. These women tended to communicate with their parents frequently, making use of reduced phone charges, thanks to recent international competition among telecommunication companies.

Fourthly, this study has paid much attention to the links between issues which international students encounter while studying abroad, the reasons for their decisions to study abroad, and their thoughts on the post-course period. This study has indicated that the less clear their reasons for deciding to study abroad and plans for the future, the more issues the students tended to encounter.

Considering these findings, it became apparent that the following four points should be considered in the future study of international students:

1. The active use of qualitative approaches
2. The segmentation of international students by different factors
3. Paying attention to issues in both educational and personal lives, and to the interrelationships within, and between, these lives
4. The links among international students' reasons for their decisions to study abroad, issues facing these students while studying abroad, and their thoughts on the post-course period

## **9.5 Suggestions for Japanese and British policies**

Looking back on the findings in this study suggests that there are three areas in which Japan needs to improve. One is the discriminatory labour market encountered by women. Due to today's dramatic decline in the number of children and the rapid increase in the number of the aged, it has been claimed that the active use of the

women's labour force is now more essential than ever before. Yet, there seems to be a societal sympathy with the employers' attitude that this is not the time to think about hiring more women on a full-time basis, since they need to cut the numbers of their employees because of the prolonged recession. However, considering the problems of paternal absenteeism caused by excessive work, of the neurosis of wives - often housewives - who bear the entire responsibility for their children's education, and of increasing juvenile crime, it is clear that there is a serious imbalance in the sharing of work between women and men. The number of women in the labour market has indeed been increased, but many of them are still compelled to engage in discriminatory labour, for example, part-time and peripheral jobs with little chance of promotion. Even though there are women who are willing to work full-time and continuously, they will be discouraged eventually, as long as the labour market continues to discriminate against them.<sup>154</sup> It is therefore essential for the labour market to be more open to women for the well being of both women and men, and for the sake of the nation.

Another area for improvement is the system of postgraduate schools. It is clear that some capable Japanese people are compelled to study abroad because of the rigidity and exclusiveness of the system, which places unreasonable obstacles in their way. For example, some universities require entrants to take examinations in English and another language,<sup>155</sup> and in special areas of knowledge, without providing equivalents to British postgraduate diploma courses. These can be unreasonably high hurdles for those who want to return to study after an interval, and for those who want to change their subjects at postgraduate level from the one they took at undergraduate level. As a result, some of those who want to go on to postgraduate studies leave Japan for other countries. However, it is often the case that, once they study abroad, many realise how relatively democratic and involving foreign higher education is, especially in the relationship between supervisors and students (Regur, 1990: 22), and in the discussions which develop in classes. Some capable Japanese students even decide to remain in their adopted countries as academic staff, preferring the atmosphere there. This 'brain-drain' is certainly not desirable for Japan although problems related to Japanese educational

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<sup>154</sup> Private companies must realise the benefits of hiring women for themselves: in fact, for example, Sanyo, one of major Japanese electrical goods manufactures, makes full use of women to design domestic electrical goods. A hotel in Tokyo utilises women employees who have learned hotel management abroad to attract women as their guests by developing various services particularly for women.

<sup>155</sup> Though some other universities have recently eliminated this hurdle.

system may be the original cause. In addition, criticisms of Japanese higher education, especially postgraduate education, as I have already discussed, are intense both inside and outside Japan (see Section 2.4). It is time Japanese higher educational institutions recognised their problems and made improvements so as to gain international respect.

The third needing attention is the Japanese government's methods of internationalising their higher education. They have been eager to improve the quality of higher education by receiving international students and have invested enormous amount of national finance to attract these students. However, they seem indifferent to utilising Japanese graduates who have studied abroad. In addition, many universities still recruit new academic staff through recommendations from academic staff based in Japan: through *enko* or *kone* (human relation). In such cases, Japanese graduates who have studied abroad are disadvantaged by their long absence from their home country compared with those who base themselves in Japan.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, such practices appear to discourage the internationalisation of higher education institutions. The Japanese government urgently needs to realise that they waste human resources which could be otherwise utilised in the internationalisation of Japanese higher education at little cost. They also need to pressure higher education institutions to be open to their nationals who have been educated abroad. By doing these, the government can reduce costs, universities can internationalise themselves, and students who have studied abroad can obtain places.

There are also two areas that the UK should consider. One is the attitude of academic staff towards international students. It has become clear that the issues which international students face while studying abroad are often reflections of the societies that they come from. It is therefore not enough for academic staff to pay attention only to the academic performance of international students. It is also necessary for the staff to be aware of the issues that their students are facing, and the possible barriers they may face, especially after they return to their own countries, and to encourage them to surmount those barriers by giving useful advice. Otherwise not only will students continue to suffer from the clash between their desire to concentrate on study and the

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<sup>156</sup> There are also many learned societies, which require people who hope to become members to be nominated by members of the societies in Japan. In this respect, students who study abroad are disadvantaged because they know few academic staff or members of those societies who can help them join these societies, compared with students who remain in Japan. This system seems to be hindering the internationalisation of the societies, in the same way as the recruitment of academic staff through *enko* or

reality that they cannot do so, but also the efforts put into good pedagogic practices will be less effective than they could be. To realise this, more discussion is required between the staff and international students, since the staff have little opportunity of knowing these issues.

Moreover, it is important that UK higher education is aware of the barrier, which international students may encounter after they return to their home countries if they are foreign PhD holders. Even though the situation has been changing,<sup>157</sup> there is still a tendency in Japan for foreign (including British) PhDs not to be considered as good as Japanese PhDs, except in the natural sciences. This is simply because there is a strong belief among Japanese academics that PhDs in arts, humanities and social science should not be awarded easily, which is quite different from in the field of natural science or the UK or the US. As a result, only a few people in those fields obtain PhDs, but often several years *after* they have finished PhD courses (Yamamoto, 1995: 122). Although the larger number of foreign PhDs does not mean that their quality is lower than PhDs awarded in Japan, that point seems to be seriously misunderstood. It is therefore unfortunate and unreasonable that Japanese PhD holders from the UK, who have received a high quality of education there, and the UK higher education institutions themselves, are not appreciated. To enable Japanese PhD holders from the UK to obtain places at Japanese higher educational institutions, the UK should publicise the quality of its higher education in Japan. The promotion of UK higher education must be helpful for both Japanese PhD students studying in the UK and the UK itself, to increase the number of international students: if people know of its quality and of its value in improving their occupational prospects, they will be motivated to study abroad in the UK.

The other area for attention is the necessary increase of research-based studies on international students in the future. As stated earlier, this study has suggested the necessity of research along the following lines to understand the conditions of international students better: (1) fieldwork with international students, especially work that is based on qualitative methods, (2) segmenting students into specific groups, for example, by gender, ethnicity, and level of study, (3) attention to both the educational

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*kone.*

<sup>157</sup> The Japanese government has pressuring Japanese postgraduate schools to award PhDs while students are in doctoral courses.

and personal lives of international students, and (4) examining the links among international students' reasons for deciding to study abroad, the issues which they may encounter while studying abroad, and their aspirations for the post-course period. Such research will ensure that international students will be better understood by people in their host country than before, which will certainly be of great benefit to these students. Furthermore, if the findings of such studies lead to the improvement of policies and practices on hosting international students in the UK, then the UK's capacity to recruit such students in the international market will be greatly enhanced. The UK may gain marketing implications through carrying out similar research, just as this study has several implications for Japanese students. It might be a good idea, for example, for the UK to recruit deliberately among women who go to language schools, the wives of men who are in the UK on business, and men through their employers.

This study is merely a first step: it reflects an attempt to listen to voice of international students and make use of the information collected in the ways I have discussed. However, the participants in this study were limited to one particular nationality from a high-income country. I would therefore recommend that other similar studies on other countries should be actively conducted. This would make it possible for the UK to form a systematic and informed understanding of its international students. Such an understanding, grounded in findings from research conducted according to the four principles suggested above, can then be used for the benefit of both international students and the UK. This PhD thesis shows the potential of qualitative research to uncover the previously unexplored complexities of the lives of international students: it is a start in the work of understanding those complexities.

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## Appendix I-1

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



This order is in accordance with the order of the number of enrollments in 1993/94.

\*\* The figures relating to France before 1992/93 are those of public universities only.

\*\*\* The figures relating to Germany before 1988/89 are the total of those of former East Germany and former West Germany.

\*\*\*\* The Figures relating to 1970/71 - 1990/91 are of USSR. The Figures after 1991/92 are of Russian Federation. The data published in 1980/81 relates to year 1978/79.

Source: UNESCO (1973-1998) *The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris, Lanham MD: UNESCO Publishing and Berman Press

## Appendix I-2

**Figure A-1 The Number of International Students Enrolled in Higher Education by Country, Top 7**

DIAGRAM REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



- \* The figures relating to the USSR in 1979/80 - 1985/86 are missing. The figure 1980/81 of USSR is of 1978/79.
- \*\* The figures of Germany before 1988/89 are the total of those of former East Germany and former West Germany.
- \*\*\* Germany 1989/90, 1992/93, Russia 1992/93, Japan 1990/91, 1992/93, Australia 1986/87, 1987/88: These figures in UNESCO Statistical Yearbook are missing, therefore the figures for these years are calculated by averaging figures of the previous and following years.

Source: UNESCO (1973-1998) *The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris, Lanham MD: UNESCO Publishing and Bernan Press



## Appendix I-3

**Figure A-2 The Number of Enrollment in Japan (1970/71 - 1994/95)**

DIAGRAM REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



\* 1976/77, 1990/91, 1992/93: Figures from the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook are missing, therefore the figures for these years are calculated by averaging figures of the prior and following years.

Source: UNESCO (1973-1998) *The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris, Lanham MD: UNESCO Publishing and Bernan Press

## Appendix I-4

**Figure A-3 The Number of International Students Enrolled in  
Higher Education in the UK (1970/71 - 1995/96)**

DIAGRAM REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



1970/71 1975/76 1976/77 1977/78 1978/79 1979/80 1980/81 1981/82 1982/83 1983/84 1984/85 1985/86 1986/87 1987/88 1988/89 1989/90 1990/91 1991/92 1992/93 1993/94 1994/95 1995/96

\* The figure of 1976/77 in UNESCO Statistical Yearbook is missing, therefore the figures for these years are calculated by averaging figures of the previous and following years.

Source: UNESCO (1973-1998) *The UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, Paris, Lanham MD: UNESCO Publishing and Bernan Press

## Appendix I-5

**Table A-2 Total number of international and Japanese students at UK academic institutions (1997-98) by level of study, mode of study, and gender**

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



\* This includes both MPhil and PhD students. It is a regulation of the University of London to that people who want to take PhD courses are registered as MPhil students with some exceptions.

\*\* This includes all of MA, MSc, and MBA students.

\*\*\* Postgraduate diploma and certificate are regarded as a part of postgraduate programmes in UK, but the equivalent course does not exist in Japan. It is appropriate to consider postgraduate diploma and certificate as the preparatory courses for MAs.

Source: The data for Japanese students was supplied by SRHE by the agreement with HESA in 2000.

## **Appendix II-1 (The Original is in Japanese.)**

Questionnaire for the exploratory pilot work

### **Attitudes of Postgraduate Japanese Students**

1. About your future

(1) View on occupations to which you aspire

(2) View on marriage (whether you would like to get married or not, what kind of life you would like to have with your partner, and about an arranged marriage or a love marriage)

(3) Your ideal life style and life plan

2. If you could start your life over again, from which age would you like to start? And what kind of new life would you like to start? What are the reasons?

3. What, if anything, are you worried about at the moment?

4. About your parents

(1) What are your feelings towards your mother?

(1)a. Some mothers of women undergraduate/postgraduate students tend to think 'I would like my daughters to do what I could not do', while the daughters who have such mothers seem to think 'I feel sorry for my mother', or tend to feel guilty. What do you think about this tendency?

(2) What are your feelings towards your father?

(3) What was the main reason why your father/mother gave you consent (or permission) to study abroad, whilst many parents tend to pressure their children to get married earlier?

(4) According to my observation of Japanese women postgraduate students, the relationship between the students and their parents seem good. How is the relationship in your case? And why is it like that?

(5) How do you currently express your duty towards your parents? And how would you like to do this in the future?

5. Others

(1) What is your view of women's studies/feminism?

(2) Do you have any suggestions for this research?

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

## **Appendix II-2 (The Original is in Japanese.)**

Questions for group interviews (25, October, 1996)

1. Would you tell me the reason, you decided to study abroad?
2. What do you think advantages of study abroad are?
3. What do you think disadvantages of study abroad are?
4. Do you think that you have changed through living abroad?
5. When do you feel happy to be Japanese?
6. When do you feel happy to be Japanese?
7. Have you ever recognized that you are Japanese through living abroad?
8. Have you ever thought about femininity?
9. Are there any points that you want to preserve Japanese concepts of women-ness?
10. Are there any points that you want to learn from Western people?
11. Are there any points that you want to learn from Western people, but which you find difficult to put into practice?
12. Are there any points you are afraid of when you return to Japan?
13. Is there anyone whom you are afraid of on your return to Japan?
14. Are there any points, not already covered, that you think it would be useful for me to consider?

## Appendix II-3

Room 204  
41 Judd Street  
London WC1H 9QS  
Tel/Fax 0171-383-5033

2nd April, 1997

Dear Mr.Bunn,

How are you? I am sorry that I have not written to you for such a long time. My name is Akiko Nishio and I was a scholar of the Rotary Foundation at the Institute of Education, University of London from 1994 to 1995. I completed an MA course in Women's Studies and Education in autumn, 1995 and came back to London to continue my studies in spring 1996. I am currently doing an MPhil/PhD course in education at the same institution.

I am writing this letter to you to ask for your help with my research. The theme of My PhD thesis is "Psychological and sociological factors which hinder Japanese postgraduates studying in England – with special reference to gender and those factors which prevent individuals from realising their potential in society". I have been therefore trying to find Japanese postgraduates studying in London and asking them to take part in my research through questionnaires and interviews. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with some information on Japanese students currently studying in London. Alternatively, if you are no longer in charge of student welfare, perhaps you could advise me who to contact. I will call you in a few days and look forward to talking with you again.

Yours sincerely,

Akiko Nishio



## Appendix II-4

拝啓

花の便りもにぎやかな季節となりました。ご勉励のことと存じます。このたびは突然お便りを差し上げ、申し訳ございません。\_\_\_\_様のお名前及びご住所は、国際ロータリー第2650地区財団学友名簿を通じて存じ上げました。私は1994-1995年にかけて奨学金をいただき、Institute of Education, University of London にて MA in Women's Studies and Educaiton を修了いたしました。1996年春から同InstituteのMPhil/PhD コースに在籍し、日本人大学院留学生の異文化受容についての考察をテーマに研究を続けております。

さてこの度、失礼を承知しつつご連絡申し上げましたのも、\_\_\_\_様にぜひお力添え頂きたいという願いからでございます。上記テーマからお察し願えるかと存じますが、日本人大学院生男女50名を目標にリサーチ（アンケート及びインタビュー）を開始いたしました。けれども、知り合いがおりませんので思ったようにはかどらず、少々落胆しております。つきましては、\_\_\_\_様にご協力頂けませんか。勝手なお願いとは存じますが、よろしくお願いいたします。名簿からは、\_\_\_\_様がどのような形で語留学されていらっしゃるのかはわかりかねます。もし私のリサーチ対象に該当されない場合は、アドバイスだけでもいただければ幸いです。近々あらためてお電話させていただきます。勝手なことばかり書き並べ、恐縮に存じますが、何卒よろしくお願い申し上げます。季節不順の折、ご自愛下さいませ。      かしこ

平成9年3月25日

\_\_\_\_\_様

追伸：念のため、私の連絡先を付記いたします。

Room 204, 41 Judd Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1H 9QS

Tel/fax (direct): 0171-383-5033

## Appendix II-5

1997年5月吉日

英国の大学院に留学中の皆様へ

University of London

Institute of Education

西尾亜希子

### 英国留学と異文化受容についてのリサーチに関するご協力（依頼）

拝啓 新緑の候、皆様におかれましてはますますご健勝のこととお慶び申し上げます。

さて、私は University of London, Institute of Education の MPhil/PhD 課程に在籍し、『日本人大学院留学生の異文化受容の考察』をテーマに研究をいたしております。研究テーマの関係上、日本人大学院留学生の方々にご協力賜り、アンケートならびにインタビューを実施させて頂き、分析・調査を行っております。つきましては、皆様にもご協力賜りたくよろしくお願い申し上げます。なお、インタビューの概要につきましては下記の通りです。アンケート・インタビューにご協力頂ける方は、誠にお手数乍ら添付別紙にご連絡先等ご記入頂ければ幸いです。場所・日時等に詳細につきましては、別途打ち合わせさせていただきます。

お忙しい中誠に恐縮乍ら、何卒よろしくお願い申し上げます。

敬具

### 記

- 1 対象： 日本人大学院留学生 50名（男性25名、女性25名）
- 2 時間： 合計60分（アンケート・インタビュー）
- 3 内容： （1） 留学を決心されるに至った背景とイギリスでの実生活について  
（2） 異文化受容について  
留学を通じての自己変化  
日本人としてのアイデンティティ  
帰国後に予想されるであろうアジャストメント 等

以上

別紙

ご協力ありがとうございます。下記内容をご記入下さい。こちらよりご連絡申し上げます。

氏名 (ふりがな) :

\_\_\_\_\_

住所 :

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

電話番号 :

\_\_\_\_\_

所属大学 :

\_\_\_\_\_

所属学部 :

\_\_\_\_\_

目指されている学位 :

\_\_\_\_\_

ご都合のよろしい時間 :

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

以上

## Appendix II-6

### リサーチの目的

- このアンケートとインタビューは論文を書く上で非常に重要な部分を占めます。私の博士論文のテーマはイギリスで学ぶ日本人大学院生の異文化受容についての考察です。
- 男性・女性合計50人にアンケート及びインタビューを実施する予定です。

### アンケートとインタビューについてのガイドライン

- アンケートは一見長く見えますが、どうかご心配下さいませんように。実際は20分前後で答えていただけたと思います。
- アンケートでは異文化受容についてお尋ねするというよりは、留学を決心されるに至った背景とイギリスでの生活についてお尋ねします。
- できるだけすべての質問にご解答下さい。
- 回答不可能である場合は、空白にせず次の容量で必ず印をお付け下さい。集計の際、「質問を見落とされたのではないこと」を証明するために必要です。

－「わからない場合」	DK	(=Do not know)
－「回答したくない場合」	DW	(=Do not wish)
－「当てはまらない場合」	NA	(=Not applicable)

- アンケートの質問の中には私生活についてお聞かせ願うものがありますが、これらの質問は研究を深める上で不可欠な部分です。この度いただくご回答は、論文に活用させていただくことだけが目的であって、その他の利用目的は一切ありません。また秘密厳守を硬くお約束します。よって、できるだけ「性格かつ正直に」ご回答下さいますようお願いします。
- 回答は「日本語」、「英語」、「日・英両用」のいずれかでお願いします。
- インタビューは約30~40分かかります。ご了承下さい。

## Appendix II-7

Nendai hayami-hyo (年代早見表)

年号	西暦	年号	西暦
昭和 40	1965	昭和 56	1981
41	1966	57	1982
42	1967	58	1983
43	1968	59	1984
44	1969	60	1985
45	1970	61	1986
46	1971	62	1987
47	1972	63	1988
48	1973	平成 1	1989
49	1974	2	1990
50	1975	3	1991
51	1976	4	1992
52	1977	5	1993
53	1978	6	1994
54	1979	7	1995
55	1980	8	1996

## Appendix II-8

reference no.

date / /

## Questionnaire

**Please circle the appropriate response.**

## Background Data

- [illegible]

## Studying Abroad

1. Is your present course available in Japan? 1. Yes 2. No  
- If "Yes", why did you decide to study overseas?  
  
- If "No", how did you become interested in your studies?
2. What do you want to do with the knowledge gained through your present course?
3. Did you have any special reasons for coming to England?
4. How important were the following in your chose of institution?

		Very important				Not at all important
1)	The strength in certain subject areas	1	2	3	4	5
2)	Prestige of the institution	1	2	3	4	5
3)	The area in which the institution is located	1	2	3	4	5
4)	The cost of tuition fee	1	2	3	4	5
5)	No special reason	1	2	3	4	5
6)	Other. Please specify: _____					

5. Is the institution where you are currently studying your first choice? 1. Yes 2. No

6. Why did you choose your major field of study?

	Very important				Not at all important
1) Interest in the subject	1	2	3	4	5
2) Career prospects	1	2	3	4	5
3) The suitability to your talent/capability	1	2	3	4	5
4) The strength of the subject as a whole	1	2	3	4	5
5) Other. Please specify _____	1	2	3	4	5

7. To what extent have you had significant problems in any of the following areas during your study period abroad?

	Very serious problems				No problems at all
1) Taking courses/examinations in a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
2) Academic level of courses too advanced	1	2	3	4	5
3) Differences in teaching/learning methods between home and host institutions	1	2	3	4	5
4) Differences in class or student project size	1	2	3	4	5
5) Financial matters	1	2	3	4	5
6) Finding a place to concentrate on studies outside the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
7) Accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
8) Climate, food, health	1	2	3	4	5
9) Interaction with British people	1	2	3	4	5
10) Not enough contact with British people	1	2	3	4	5
11) Not enough contact with people from other countries	1	2	3	4	5
12) Too much contact with Japanese people	1	2	3	4	5
13) Not enough time outside study	1	2	3	4	5
14) Other. Please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please indicate the frequency with which you spend time in each category of activity.

	Very frequently				Never
1) Spending time in libraries	1	2	3	4	5
2) Going out for meals with Japanese	1	2	3	4	5
3) Going out for meals with foreigners	1	2	3	4	5
4) Participating in organisations	1	2	3	4	5
5) Working on part-time basis	1	2	3	4	5
Please specify: _____					
6) Visiting museums, attending concerts, theatres, films etc.	1	2	3	4	5
7) Travelling	1	2	3	4	5
8) Sports	1	2	3	4	5
9) Entertaining others from overseas (including people from Japan)	1	2	3	4	5

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10) | Domestic work (e.g. cooking for yourself) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11) | Others. Please specify:                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- 

9. What, if any, reason(s) prevent you from concentrating on your studies?

10. Please indicate the **average** amount of time you spend with the following people **per day** (including talking on the telephone), choosing the appropriate response from the following:

less than 5 minutes	5 – 19 minutes	20 – 39 minutes	40 – 59 minutes
1 hour – less than 1.5 hours	1.5 hours – less than 2 hours		
2 hours – less than 2.5 hours	2.5 hours – less than 3 hours		
3 hours – less than 3.5 hours	more than 3.5 hours		

1) With British people \_\_\_\_\_  
 With people from other countries \_\_\_\_\_  
 With Japanese people \_\_\_\_\_

2) With people from the same course \_\_\_\_\_  
 With people from the same institution \_\_\_\_\_  
 With supervisors and tutors \_\_\_\_\_  
 With people at the same accommodation \_\_\_\_\_  
 With others \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please indicate the top 3 nationalities of those with whom you talk.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please indicate the frequency you make phone-calls to the following people in Japan per week.

	times/week:	minutes/call
Family	_____	_____
Girl/boyfriend (if any)	_____	_____
Other friends in Japan	_____	_____
Others ( )	_____	_____

13. How do you finance your studies in England? Please indicate in percentages.

Parental Contributions	_____ %
Other relatives' contributions	_____
Scholarship/award	_____
Income from your own work	_____
Your own savings	_____
Others ( )	_____



14. How much do you spend on the following **per month**?

Books	£ _____
Other stationary including making photocopies	_____
Entertainment (e.g. movies, concerts theatres)	_____
Food shopping	_____
Restaurant/café/pubs	_____
Accommodation rent	_____
C.D. and cassettes	_____
Sports	_____
Gambling	_____
Smoking	_____
Clothes and cosmetics	_____
Other. Please specify:	_____

15. What kind of accommodation do you live in? Please choose one (or two) from the following and check/tick.

University dormitory/residential hall	_____
Flat run by Univ. of London	_____
With another family	_____
Private flat/studio	_____
Other. Please specify:	_____

- Is it a shared or private room?

Shared ( ) Private ( )

16. What importance has personal contact with the following people had in shaping your overall experience while abroad?

	Very important				Not at all important	No contact
1) British students	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) Japanese students	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) Students from other countries	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) Teaching staff and other staff at your institution	1	2	3	4	5	6
5) Others. Please specify:	1	2	3	4	5	6

17. During your study abroad, how extensively do you use the following to become better informed about Britain?

	Extensively				Not at all
1) Host country newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
2) Host country magazines	1	2	3	4	5
3) Host country professional journals and books	1	2	3	4	5
4) Host country radio programmes	1	2	3	4	5
5) Host country TV programmes	1	2	3	4	5
6) Others. Please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

18. How would you rate your current level of knowledge with regard to the following aspects of Britain?

	Extensive knowledge				Minimal knowledge
1) The political system	1	2	3	4	5
2) The dominant political issues	1	2	3	4	5
3) The educational system	1	2	3	4	5
4) Cultural life (e.g. art, music)	1	2	3	4	5
5) Dominant social issues	1	2	3	4	5
6) The economic system	1	2	3	4	5
7) The country's geography	1	2	3	4	5
8) Social structure (e.g. class)	1	2	3	4	5
9) Customs, traditions	1	2	3	4	5
10) Sports recreational activities	1	2	3	4	5

19. What is the degree of your overall satisfaction?

	Very satisfies				Very dissatisfied
1) With your academic life	1	2	3	4	5
2) With your outside academic life	1	2	3	4	5

20. Please indicate whether you see yourself as being strong or weak with respect to each of the following?

	Strong				Weak
1) Getting accustomed to new food or climate	1	2	3	4	5
2) Making friends easily	1	2	3	4	5
3) Being independent	1	2	3	4	5
4) Adopting new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
5) Being adventurous	1	2	3	4	5

21. If circumstances allowed you, would you like to remain in England after completing your course? 1. Yes 2. No

- If "Yes", what and for how long would you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- If "No", why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Data

1. Which part of Japan do you come from? (The name of prefecture)

Please refer to the '*Nendai hayami-hyo*' on the attached chart to answer questions 2 and 3.

2. What did you study before coming to the UK? (after graduating from high school)

Period	The prefecture where the institution is/was located	Degree	Field
~			
~			
~			
~			

3. What work did you do before coming to the UK? (after graduation from high school)

Period	The type of the company (e.g. bank, primary school)	Section/Department
~		
~		
~		
~		
~		

4. Is this the first time you have been abroad? 1. Yes 2. No  
-If "No", what other countries have you been to? Please list:

-If you have been abroad for long period (more than 10 days), how long, where and what age did you stay in those countries?

	No. of weeks/months	Where	Age
Tourism			
Attending school/Univ.			
Working			
Others			

5. What are your parents' occupations? Please give as much as detail as possible. (If either is retired or deceased, please write her/his previous occupation.)  
Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have your parents lived abroad? 1. Yes 2. No  
If "Yes", what was/were reason(s)?  
1. Business 2. Studies  
3. Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many siblings do you have?  
What is/are your relationship with her/him/them? (e.g. brother/sister),

Relationship	Occupation

8. Which, if any, other countries and institutions did you consider studying at?

Country	Institution name

### Career Prospects

1. Please indicate in as much detail as possible the professional career which you are most likely to pursue:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How set are these career goals?
- |                    |   |   |   |   |                          |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| Very<br>determined |   |   |   |   | Not at all<br>determined |
| 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                          |
3. How does your present course relate to your future career plans?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Once again I would like to assure you that the information given here will be used only for my thesis and will be strictly confidential.**

**Thank you very much for your co-operation!**

## Appendix II-9

**Thank you very much for your co-operation. Finally, would you please answer the following question?**

**Would you be happy to contribute to a follow-up (second), but much shorter interview? I am planning to conduct this interview in approximately 4-6 months time.**

**1. Yes      2. No.**

**If 'Yes', would you write your name, address and telephone number?**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Akiko Nishio**

## **Appendix II-10 (The Original is in Japanese.)**

### **Questions for interviews**

#### **Part A**

1. Could you tell me the reason, purpose/objective and motive that made you decide to study abroad?
2. Are there any particular persons who influenced you?
3. Have you encountered turning points in your life?
4. What were reactions from other people around you when you decided to study abroad?
5. How did you respond to them?
6. What were your thoughts on their reactions?
7. How much are your parents supportive of your study?
8. How much are your parents supportive of your study?

#### **Part B**

9. What kind of impression do you have of Britain, and of British men or women?
10. Have you ever experienced racial discrimination in the UK?
  - If so, what kind of discrimination was it?
11. How did you feel about it?
12. How did you feel about it as a Japanese?
13. Do you think that you have changed through studying abroad?
  - If so, in what ways do you think?
14. Have you ever recognised that you are Japanese through living abroad?
  - If so, in what situation did you think so?
15. Have you ever recognised that you are a Japanese man/woman?
  - If so, in what situation did you think so?
16. Have you ever recognised that you are obsessed by Japanese traditions or customs?
  - If so, in what situation did you think so?

17. Are there any points that you value in Japanese people?
18. Are there any points that you want to maintain as a Japanese?
19. Are there any points that you want to learn from Western people?
20. Do you think that you put them into practice?
  - If you do not, what is the reason?

#### Part C

21. You are currently a postgraduate student. Do you have any thoughts on your position?
22. Do you currently have any complex feelings?
  - If so, how do you try to reduce feelings?
23. Do you feel pressured from your study?
  - If so, in what way do you feel?
24. Do you feel pressured from your private life?
  - If so, in what way do you feel?

#### Part D

25. Do you think you can adapt to Japanese society when you return there?
  - If so, why?
  - If not, why?
26. What kind of occupation do you aspire to after completing your course?
27. Why are you interested in the work?

## **Appendix III-1**

### **The participants**

#### **1 The University of London**

The University of London was founded by Royal Charter in 1836 and is one of the oldest universities in the UK (University of London Accommodation Office, 1999: 3). University College London, one of its colleges, is also known as the first UK college which awarded a degree to a woman.

The University of London has expanded over the last 160 years so that by 1999, and it was a federation of 43 Colleges and Institutes (the University of London External Relations Unit, 1999: 2-3; the University of London External Relations Unit, 1997: 2-3). Moreover, the University offers external programmes as well as extra-mural studies. Internal students belong both to the College or Institute where they study and to the University. Staff and students at the University are allowed to attend classes or lectures of other Colleges or Institutes, although there are some conditions and limitations on this. Some Colleges and Institutes are eager to be independent of the University, and the University's progress as a federal university has seesawed to and fro.

#### **2 The background data on participants**

##### **2.1 Level of study and mode of study**

Like Table 2-6 on p. 00, the following Table A-3 shows that most participants were studying on a full-time basis, regardless of levels of study. However, there were five part-time students, following MA level programmes. Four of them (three women and one man) were working on a full-time or part-time basis. The three women students were working as an office worker at the Embassy of Japan, an office worker in a Japanese electrical goods manufacture and a teacher of Japanese respectively, and the man student was working as an interpreter at the BBC. Postdoctoral students were all men, as shown in Table A-33: two were in pharmaceuticals, one in biology, and one in histopathology.



**Table A-3 Participants by level of study, mode of study and gender**

Level of Study	Full-time		Part-time		Other HE modes		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Doctorate *	5	8	0	0	0	0	13
Master **	14	12	4	1	0	0	31
Postgraduate diploma and certificate (not PGCE) ***	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Others ****	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>	21	22	4	1	0	4	52

\* This includes both MPhil/PhD and PhD students. It is a regulation of the University of London that people who want to take PhD courses are registered as MPhil students, with some exceptions.

\*\* This includes all MA, MSc, and MBA students.

\*\*\* Postgraduate diplomas and certificates are regarded as postgraduate programmes in the UK, but equivalent courses do not exist in Japan. It is appropriate to consider postgraduate diplomas and certificates as preparatory courses for MAs.

\*\*\*\* The four postdoctoral students, all of whom were men, were classified in this group.

## 2.2 Subject area

The following Table A-4 shows that the range of courses which the participants were taking reached 34 in total, in a variety of fields of study, including economics, arts, education, medicine, science, law, and music. Students in some areas such as business administration, politics, and economics are relatively well-represented, when the proportions are compared with Table 2-8 on p. 00, which shows by gender the top ten subject areas read by Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions.

**Table A-4 Subject areas read by the participants by gender\***

Area	Course	Women	Men	Total
Economics	Business Administration	2	4	6
	Industrial Relations & Personnel Management	1	3	4
	Criminology	1	0	1
	Accounting & Finance	0	1	1
	Economics	0	1	1
	Geography (Economics)	0	1	1
	International Relations	0	1	1
	Political Studies	0	1	1
	Politics of the World Economy	0	1	1
	<b>Sub Total</b>	4	13	17

<b>Arts</b>	Applied Linguistics	3	1	4
	Fine Art Administration & Curatorship	2	1	3
	Japanese Linguistics	2	0	2
	African Literature	1	0	1
	Legal & Political Theory	1	0	1
	Literature, Culture, Modernity (Mythology)	1	0	1
	Phonology (Language)	1	0	1
	Contemporary Cultural Process (Sociology)	0	1	1
	Sociology	0	1	1
	English Language & Medieval Literature	0	1	1
	Fine Art (Painting)	0	1	1
<b>Sub Total</b>		11	6	17
<b>Education</b>	TESOL	2	0	2
	Comparative Education	1	0	1
	Education	1	0	1
	Values in Education	1	0	1
	Women's Studies	1	0	1
	Women's Studies & Education	1	0	1
	Learning & Teaching of English	0	2	2
	Education & International Development	0	1	1
<b>Sub Total</b>		7	3	10
<b>Medicine</b>	Histopathology	1	1	2
	Pharmaceutics	0	2	2
	<b>Sub Total</b>	1	3	4
<b>Science</b>	Applied Mathematics	0	1	1
	Biology	0	1 **	1
	<b>Sub Total</b>	0	2	2
<b>Law</b>	Law of Management & Labour Relations	1	0	1
<b>Music</b>	Opera/Performance & Related Studies	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		25	27	52

\* The classification is based on the one used by the University of London. The table is therefore not compatible with the one used by HESA referred to in Chapter 2.

\*\* I was introduced to this student by another student through snowball sampling. Although he was originally introduced as an MA student taking Applied Linguistics on a part-time basis, I decided to regard him as a postdoctoral student in Biology. He was entirely dependent on financial support from his employer to study Biology and it was possible to judge that he would not have been in the UK, if he had not had this support. In relation to this, he would have little chance to study Applied Linguistics in his spare time in this country.

## 2.3 Institutions

The following Table A-5 shows that the number of participants studying at the Institute of Education (IoE) was large: perhaps, with hindsight, women students from the IoE were over-represented. Nevertheless, a check with Table 2-10 on p. 00, which shows the top ten institutions for Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions by gender, indicates that the three institutions and colleges of the University of London appearing in the table were covered in this study.

**Table A-5 Participants' institutions and colleges by gender**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
London School of Economics and Political Sciences	3	8	11
Institute of Education	7	3	10
Goldsmiths College	2	3	5
The School of Oriental and African Studies	4	1	5
Birkbeck College	3	1	4
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	1	3	4
London Business School	1	2	3
University College London	1	2	3
King's College London	1	1	2
School of Pharmacy	0	2	2
Queen Mary and Westfield College	1	0	1
Royal PS Medical School	0	1	1
Trinity College of Music	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>52</b>

## 2.4 Age groups

Due to the difference in the classification of age groups between my research and HESA, the following Table A-6 and Table 2-12 on p. 00, which shows the number of Japanese postgraduate students in UK academic institutions by age group and gender, are not entirely comparable. However, the proportion of women to that of men seems to be representative.

**Table A-6 Participants by age group and gender\***

Age	Women	Men	Total
20 - 24	2	0	2
25 - 29	9	12	21
30 - 34	8	11	19
35 - 39	3	3	6
40 - 44	1	1	2
45 - 49	2	0	2
<b>Total *</b>	25	27	52

## 2.5 Japanese academic institutions where participants graduated from in Japan

The universities from which the participants graduated break down into 22 universities and junior colleges in the case of women students, and 15 universities in the case of men students. However, nearly a half of the participants were graduates from private co-educational universities. Moreover, while no women students had taken postgraduate-level programmes before their studying abroad, nine men students had done so: five had completed master's courses, and four, doctoral courses. Two women

**Table A-7 Participants by Japanese academic institutions of origin and gender \***

Institutions		Women	Men	Total
<b>Stated</b>	Co-ed	5	8	13
	Women's	3	-	3
<b>Prefectural &amp; Municipal</b>	Co-ed	2	1	3
	Women's	0	-	0
<b>Private</b>	Co-ed	9	17	26
	Women's	2	-	2
	Junior college **	2	-	2
<b>Unknown</b>		2	1	3
<b>Total</b>		25	27	52

\* As to universities that research participants graduated from in Japan, I conducted follow-up research about a year after I finished the first interviews with them. However, I could not get in touch with two women and one man student.

\*\* While most university courses are for four years, junior college courses are for two years in Japan.

students who had graduated from junior colleges in Japan had completed postgraduate diploma courses in the UK before enrolling on their current master's courses, and one of them had completed a BA course in the UK, too. There were also some students who had completed postgraduate diploma courses in the UK, after having graduated from universities in Japan. Most of these students were required to do so because they wanted to study different subjects from their first degrees and had little background knowledge and experience of them.

## 2.6 Marital status and children

Table A-8 shows that there were more married men than married women, and many more of them were accompanied by their spouses and children: 11 against three. Only two married man had left their wives and children in Japan; one wife was expecting a baby and the other was working full-time. Two men were accompanied by their wives, having been successful in persuading their wives, who had very much wished to continue their work, to leave their jobs and accompany them. In this respect, it is easy to imagine the strength of the concern which these men later felt about their wives' happiness while they themselves were studying.

**Table A-8 Participants by marital status and gender**

<b>Marital status</b>		<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Single</b>		19	16	35
<b>Married</b>	With child(ren)	0	5	5
	Without children	3	6	9
<b>Divorced</b>	With child(ren)	1	0	1
	Without children	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>		25	27	52

Three women students were married, and all of these had initially come to the UK to accompany their husbands who had been appointed to work in the London offices of their companies or had decided to study abroad in the UK. There was also one divorced woman who had two children. However, she had left them with her parents in Japan, because both of her children had reached adolescence and she thought they were old

were old enough to live with little support from their mother.

## 2.7 Mode of studying abroad and sources of finance

In the case of self-funded students, their sources of finance varied, as shown below. The shadowed cells indicate information on self-funded students, who paid the expenses of their study abroad, such as tuition fees and living costs, with financial support from people close to them, for example parents, relatives or spouses. In this respect, it was apparent that more women tended to get financial help from these people than men: 76 % against 41%.

**Table A-9 Participants by source of finance and gender**

Source of finance		Women		Men		Total
		Number	% *	Number	% *	
1	Fully supported by parents, relatives, and/or spouse	10	40	5	19	15
2	Partly supported by parents, relatives, and/or spouse + other means	9	36	6	22	15
3	Current full-time work *	2	8	1	4	3
4	Savings	2	8	2	7	4
5	Sponsored by employers	1	4	9	33	10
6	Current part-time work + savings	1	4	1	4	2
7	Savings + scholarships	0	0	1	4	2
8	Current part-time work + Scholarship	0	0	2	7	1
Total		25	100	27	100	52

\* All three full-time workers were taking MA courses on a part-time basis.

Only one woman student (4%) was sponsored by her employer compared with nine men students (33%). In addition to these nine men, two men were studying abroad on temporary leave from their workplaces. However, their main sources of finance were not their employers, but scholarships.

It is also interesting to note that only one woman out of 24 self-funded women had scholarships for their studies, in comparison with three men out of 18 self-funded men: 4% against 17 %. This implies that women tend to be less reluctant to be financially

dependent on people close to them than men.

Moreover, there were also two women who revealed that the expenses for their study abroad are paid from inheritance from their father or grandmother.

As a whole, women tended to study abroad with financial help from people close to them, compared with men who tended to use their own resources or those of their employers for their study abroad.

## 2.8 Family profiles of the participants

It is clear that the number of company owners or self-employed is relatively large. The number of professionals, including an editorial writer, a journalist, a university lecturer and a translator, is also relatively large. In addition, it is interesting to note that only women had fathers who were doctors and a lawyer: high status and well-paid occupations in Japan. These tendencies imply that many of the participants come from

**Table A-10 Fathers' occupational categories by gender**

Occupation		Women	Men	Total
Office worker and executives		7	12	19
Company owner or self-employed		7	6	13
Teaching staff	Junior-high school teacher	1	1	2
	University lecturer	0	2	2
Civil servant		1	1	2
Doctor		2	0	2
Other occupations*		4	5	10
Dead		2	0	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>52</b>

\* There were in addition a lawyer, an editorial writer, an X-ray technician, a Shinto priest, and a flat-landlord in the case of women students. The men students comprised an artist, an architect, a journalist, a carpenter, and translator.

families of high standings in terms of level of education and wealth. This is borne out by the education they had received before they took their current courses and the large number of students with financial support from their parents.

**Table A-11 Mothers' occupational categories by gender**

Occupation		Women	Men	Total
House wives		16	18	34
Helping husband's work		4	2	6
Teaching staff	Primary school teacher	1	2	3
	University lecturer	2	0	2
Office worker		1	1	2
Other occupation		1	4	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>52</b>

\* As to other occupations, there was a pharmacist in the case of women students, while there were a civil servant, dressmaker, a dance teacher, and a piano teacher in the case of men students.

The wealth of the participants' families is predictable from the number of students with financial support from their parents, from their fathers' occupations, as already discussed, and from the large number of housewife mothers as shown in Table A-11. Students with financial support from parents tended to have housewife mothers, which confirmed that their fathers' incomes were high enough to support all the members of their families.

**Table A-12 Brothers' occupational categories by gender**

Occupation		Women	Men	Total
Office worker		8	7	15
Company owner or self-employed		2	4	6
Teaching staff	Junior high school teacher	0	1	1
	University lecturer	2	0	2
Doctor		1	2	3
Other occupations*		2	1	3
Student		4	1	5
Unemployed		0	1	1
Dead		0	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>

\* As to other occupations, there was a photographer and a civil servant in the case of women students, while there was a dentist in the case of men students.

A relatively large number of brothers were company owners or self-employed, and



most of them were sons of company owners or self-employed fathers: it can be therefore imagined that those sons either succeeded to a part of their father's work or had financial help from their fathers to establish their own business.

**Table A-13 Sisters' occupational categories by gender**

Occupation		Women	Men	Total
Office worker		3	5	8
Teaching staff	University lecturer	1	2	3
	University assistant-lecturer	2	0	2
Housewife		1	3	4
Unemployed		1	2	3
Student		1	2	3
Civil servant		0	2	2
Other occupations*		7	2	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>

\* As to other occupations, there was a doctor, a sister helping her father's work, a nurse, an optician, a social worker, an artist, and a hairdresser in the case of women students, while there were a TV personality and a piano teacher in the case of men students.

Unlike brothers, no sisters were company owners or self-employed. Instead, sisters' occupations varied more than those of brothers.

If I had asked whether sisters were married or not, I could have learned whether they continued working after marriage or were working as single women, but I did not.

## 2.9 Total length of previous stay abroad

The following Table A-14 shows that while more men than women had travelled abroad, many of these men had stayed abroad for a relatively short period. In particular, 16 men were concentrated in the category of over ten days and less than three months, and 11 out of the 16 men had stayed abroad for less than one month. Probably the main reason why these men's period of stay was less than three months was that these stays were short trips, including business ones.

**Table A-14 Total length of previous stay abroad by gender\***

Length of period **	Women		Men		Total
	Number	% ***	Number	% ***	
Zero	7	28	2	7	9
1 day- 10 days	0	0	0	0	0
10 days – 3 months	8	32	16	59	24
3 – 6 months	3	12	3	11	6
6 – 12 months	4	16	1	4	5
1 year – 2 years	0	0	2	7	2
2 years – 3 years	0	0	2	7	2
3 years and longer	3	12	1	4	4
<b>Total</b>	25	100	27	100	52

\* The length showed here excludes the current stay in the UK.

\*\* Length of periods: for example, '10 days – 3 months' means ten days or longer, and shorter than three months.

Women's average length of stay was 32 months, while men's was 29 months. The longest overseas period reported by a woman, who spent her childhood in the US and so called 'a returnee child', was 140 months (11 years and eight months), while the longest reported by a man, who spent his childhood in the same country, was 40 months (three years and four months).

## **2.10 Areas where participants had travelled**

There are three noteworthy points regarding the following Table A-15.

Firstly, many of both women and men had travelled in West European countries, for example, France, Germany, and Italy. More students had toured and/or stayed in those countries before coming to the UK to study than had toured around or made trips to those countries while they were studying in the UK this time. It is also a characteristic that many students tended to tour around these countries, but not to stay for long in any country. This seems to be because of their preference to see as many places as possible in a limited time.

**Table A-15 Areas where participants had travelled by gender**

Area	Women	Men	Total *
West Europe	17	20	37
North America	11	16	27
South-east Asia	6	8	14
East Asia	5	7	12
Oceania	3	2	5
Russia (USSR)	2	3	5
Africa	1	2	3
East Europe	2	1	3
The Middle East	1	0	1
<b>Total **</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>107</b>

\* This total shows the number of students.

\*\* This total shows the number of times students made trips abroad which lasted more than 10 days.

Secondly, it is also interesting to note that a relatively large number of students had been to North America, and most of these, 25 out of 27 students, had been to the US. As may be easily imagined, almost all of them chose to spent longer there than in west European countries, partly because of the size of the US. However, there are other reasons why people spent more time in the US. One is that the US is the most popular country for the exchange programme between universities and for study abroad. Moreover, the US was probably the most chosen country for travelling to celebrate one's graduation at the time when the research participants were 21 or 22.

Thirdly, it is worth noting that nobody had been to South or Central America, the Middle East, or Middle Asia.

### **2.11 Purposes of travelling abroad for more than for 10 days**

Most of foreign trips made by the participants, had been when there were 21 or 22 years old and in their third or fourth year at their universities. However, this tendency is particularly noticeable among the men. One of the reasons for the popularity of travel abroad at these particular ages is to celebrate their graduation, as mentioned earlier.

**Table A-16 Purposes of travelling abroad for more than for 10 days  
by gender**

Purposes	Women	Men	Total *
Tourism	16	14	30
Attending school/university	10	8	18
Working/business trip	1	7	8
Others (to accompany one's family, spouse, or for one's own research)	2	3	5
<b>Total **</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>61</b>

\* This total shows the number of students.

\*\* This total shows the number of times students made trips abroad which lasted more than 10 days.

More women than men had been to foreign countries to travel or attend schools or universities after they were 25 years old. This suggests that more women than men tend to take long holidays from their workplaces, and may also imply that more women than men work part-time, or take a break after leaving their previous jobs and before starting a new career. In contrast, men who could travel abroad for a holiday of more than ten days after getting jobs seemed to include only such as those who worked for, for example, foreign companies and researchers with universities or private companies. They definitely did not include office workers for Japanese private companies or government bodies, because these institutions seldom allow their employees to take holidays for as long as ten days.

## **2.12 Foreign countries where the students had attended schools or universities**

As to the participants who had attended schools or universities, their destinations varied, and included the UK, the US, France, and Spain, but the UK was the most often chosen country. Most of the participants who had worked or travelled abroad on business were working for foreign firms. One was working for a university as a researcher. Their destinations were often in the US.

**Table A-17 Foreign countries where the students had attended schools/universities prior to this research by gender**

Country	Women	Men	Total *
The UK	6	4	10
The US	3	2	5
France	1	1	2
Spain	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	10	8	18

### 2.13 Previous experiences of having been in the UK

Half of the participants (14 women and 11 men) had been to the UK before enrolling on their current postgraduate courses there. Returning to a country where they had been as visitors, or to attend short courses for formal education, tended to be common. However, the other half of the participants had never been to the UK before.

**Table A-18 Previous experiences of having been in the UK by gender**

	Women	Men	Total
Had been to the UK before	14	11	25
First time in the UK	11	16	27
<b>Total</b>	25	27	52

They can be divided into two groups: 1), those (ten women and five men) who had spent some time attending language schools and/or other courses before taking their current courses there, and 2), those (one woman and 11 men) who came directly to the UK to take their current courses. The former group were those who decided to engage themselves in formal higher-level education. As for the latter group, they may appear brave to take postgraduate courses in a completely different culture, society, educational system, and language from their own. However, most of them had been to or lived in the US or other English speaking countries for travelling or studying abroad for a short while, and they were thus not completely new to an English-speaking country or foreign education. Moreover, most of those in this group were company- or government-sponsored and had little choice about their destinations.

## 2.14 The length of current stay in the UK at time of interview

The average length of the stay was 32 months for women, and 29 months for men. This does not seem a considerable difference. Also, the length of stay in the UK before the commencement of the current course varied within both genders: some had stayed for only six months, while others had stayed for over ten years. The participants who had spent a relatively short time, less than two years in the UK, at the time of interview were often those who had been sponsored by their employers or were on scholarships. That was because most of them were sponsored only for one or occasionally two academic years and were urged to go back to Japan once they completed their courses.

**Table A-19 Length of current stay in the UK at time of interview by gender**

Length of period *	Women		Men		Total
	Number	% **	Number	% **	
Less than one year	6	24	11	41	17
1 year – 2 years	6	24	8	30	14
2 – 3 years	6	24	1	4	7
3 – 4 years	0	0	3	11	3
4 – 5 years	2	8	0	0	2
5 – 6 years	3	12	1	4	4
6 – 7 years	0	0	1	4	1
Over 7 years	2	8	2	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52</b>

\* Length of period: for example, '1 year – 2 years' means 1 year or longer, and shorter than 2 years.

## Appendix III-2

Table A-20 The participants (Women)

No.	Marital Status	Age	Institution	Level	Course	Full-time or Part-time	Period Stayed (Month)	Others*	No.
W1	S	30-34	IOE	MA	TESOL	F	10		W1
W2	S	25-29	IOE	MA	Comparative Education	F	19		W2
W3	D	35-39	Birkbeck	MA	Applied Linguistics	P	34		W3
W4	S	30-34	IOE	MA	TESOL	F	6		W4
W5	S	45-49	SOAS	MPhil/PhD	Phonology (Language)	F	96		W5
W6	S	25-29	IOE	Dip	Education	F	18		W6
W7	S	45-49	SOAS	PhD	African Literature	F	66		W7
W8	S	20-24	IOE	MA	Women's Studies & Education	F	6		W8
W9	M	35-39	Birkbeck	MA	Applied Linguistics	P	51	1	W9
W10	S	25-29	SOAS	MPhil/PhD	Japanese Linguistics	F	54		W10
W11	S	30-34	Birkbeck	MA	Applied Linguistics	P	84		W11
W12	M	30-34	IOE	MPhil/PhD	Women's Studies	F	32	2	W12
W13	S	25-29	LSE	MSc	Criminology	F	60		W13
W14	S	25-29	SOAS	MPhil/PhD	Japanese Linguistics	F	30	3	W14
W15	S	25-29	Kings	MSc	Histopathology	P	7		W15
W16	S	25-29	Trinity College of Music	Dip	Opera/Performance & Related Studies	F	33		W16
W17	S	30-34	Imperial	MBA	Business Administration	F	11	4	W17
W18	M	25-29	LSE	LLM	Law of Management & Labour Relations	F	9	1	W18
W19	S	25-29	LBS	MBA	Business Administration	F	12		W19
W20	S	25-29	LSE	MSc	Industrial Relations & Personnel Management	F	33		W20
W21	S	25-29	UCL	MA	Legal & Political Theory	F	63		W21
W22	D	35-39	Goldsmiths	MA	Fine Art Administration & Curatorship	F	13		W22
W23	S	20-24	Queen Mary & W.	MA	Literature, Culture, Modernity (Mythology)	F	15		W23
W24	D	40-44	Goldsmiths	MA	Fine Art Administration & Curatorship	F	24		W24
W25	S	30-34	IOE	MA	Values in Education	F	17		W25

\* 1. Accompanied spouse sent by employer    2. Accompanied spouse who study abroad    3. Accompanied father send by employer  
4. Sent by employer    5. Temporary leave from workplace

**Table A-21 The participants (Men)**

No.	Marital Status	Age	Institution	Level	Course	Full-time or Part-time	Period Stayed (Month)	Others*	No.
M31	S	30-34	Birkbeck	MA	Applied Linguistics	P	72		M31
M32	M	30-34	LSE	MPhil/PhD	Industrial Relations & Personnel Management	F	6		M32
M33	M	30-34	Royal PS Medical Sch.	Postdoc	Histopathology	F	9	5	M33
M34	S	30-34	LSE	MSc	Industrial Relations & Personnel Management	F	9	4	M34
M35	S	25-29	LSE	MPhil/PhD	International Relations	F	10		M35
M36	S	30-34	UCL	PhD	Applied Mathematics	F	126		M36
M37	S	25-29	LSE	PhD	Geography (Economics)	F	69		M37
M38	S	30-34	Goldsmiths	MA	Fine Art Administration & Curatorship	F	36		M38
M39	S	25-29	LSE	MSc	Politics of the World Economy	F	20		M39
M40	M	30-34	Goldsmiths	MPhil/PhD	Sociology	F	36		M40
M41	S	40-44	Kings	PhD	English Language & Medieval Literature	F	130		M41
M42	M	25-29	LBS	MBA	Business Administration	F	10	4	M42
M43	M	30-34	LBS	MBA	Business Administration	F	11	4	M43
M44	S	25-29	Imperial	MBA	Business Administration	F	21	4	M44
M45	M	30-34	Imperial	MBA	Business Administration	F	10	4	M45
M46	S	25-29	LSE	PhD	Industrial Relations & Personnel Management	F	21		M46
M47	S	25-29	IOE	MA	Education & International Development	F	10		M47
M48	M	25-29	LSE	Dip	Accounting & Finance	F	10	4	M48
M49	S	25-29	LSE	Dip	Economics	F	12	4	M49
M50	S	25-29	UCL (Slade)	MA	Contemporary Cultural Process (Sociology)	F	30		M50
M51	S	30-34	Goldsmiths	MA	Sociology	F	11		M51
M52	M	30-34	SOAS	PhD	Political Studies	F	17		M52
M53	S	25-29	IOE	MA	Learning & Teaching of English	F	39		M53
M54	M	35-39	School of Pharmacy	Postdoc	Characterization of Amorphous Drug	F	12	5	M54
M55	M	35-39	Imperial	Postdoc	Biology	F	12	4	M55
M56	M	35-39	School of Pharmacy	Postdoc	Pharmaceutics	F	15	4	M56
M57	S	25-29	IOE	MA	Learning & Teaching of English	F	8		M57

\* 1. Accompanied spouse sent by employer    2. Accompanied spouse who study abroad    3. Accompanied father send by employer  
4. Sent by employer    5. Temporary leave from workplace





